New World

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/13172640.

Rating:
Not Rated

Archive Warning:
Graphic Depictions Of Violence

Category:
M/M

Fandoms:
The Walking Dead (TV), The Walking Dead & Related Fandoms

Relationship:
Rick Grimes/Negan

Characters:
Rick Grimes, Negan (Walking Dead), Glenn Rhee, Maggie Greene, Daryl Dixon, Merle Dixon, Andrea (Walking Dead), Amy (Walking Dead), Carl Grimes, Michonne (Walking Dead), Rosita Espinosa, Carol Peletier, Tara Chambler, Hershel Greene, Dale Horvath, Sophia Peletier, Sasha Williams (Walking Dead), Tyreese Williams, Morgan Jones, Spencer Monroe, Aaron (Walking Dead), Gregory (Walking Dead: Hilltop), Dwight (Walking Dead), Simon (Walking Dead: Saviors)

Additional Tags:
Alternate Universe, Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, They make it to Alexandria at the beginning, Protectiveness, Possessive Behavior, Dubious Consent, Extremely Dubious Consent, Rick had Carl young, carl is a badass, War, Slavery, Rick isn't in charge, Rick is a badass, Possessive Negan (Walking Dead)

Language:
English

Stats:
Published: 2017-12-27 Updated: 2021-01-16 Words: 24,671
Chapters: 22/?

New World

by SumOfAllThings

Summary

There weren't too many pretty men left alive, that was for sure. And Rick sure was a pretty man. The beard was clearly an attempt to make himself look more dangerous, but there was no disguising the softly curling hair, a mouth made for cock sucking and cheekbones that could cut glass. There was something achingly beautiful about the way Rick's storm blue eyes sparkled with unshed tears. Hell, if he knew any poetry he'd write a thousand fucking sonnets about those baby blues alone.

Jesus-fuck, Negan thought he might actually be in love.

Notes

I've had this story bouncing around in my head for a while. I don't know what it is but lately I've found Rick really engaging.

Just FYI this is an alternative reality and I've made a few changes to suit my story.

1. Rick and the Atlanta group found Alexandria really early on and, for the most part, they survived.

2. Rick had Carl when he was twenty.

I won't give anything else away. I hope you enjoy :)

Chapter 1: Beautiful

“Do you think I’m blind, or stupid?” Rick demanded, blocking Carl’s path as the younger man tried to move past him. He managed to stand his ground, but it wasn’t easy. At twenty years of age the boy stood head and shoulders above Rick, effectively dwarfing his old man and making it damn near impossible to stare him down. “You come back here at all hours, covered in blood, hoarding weapons and ammo. You disappear for days on end, sometimes weeks. You never tell me where you’re going or when you’ll be back,” he heard Judith crying upstairs and immediately tried to soften his tone. “Jesus Carl, you’re scaring me.”

The boys eyes settled on Rick with an intensity that was, if he was honest with himself, a little crazed. “Of course I’m scaring you. *Everything* fucking scares you,” he spread his arms wide, gesturing around them. “You hide in here, in this stupid little town, relying on crumbling, flimsy walls to keep you safe. It’s pathetic Dad. If you only knew what was out there -”

“These pathetic walls have kept us alive,” Rick said between gritted teeth, trying his damndest to contain his temper. “You think you know best, but you’re still just a kid. You think you know what’s out there, but you don’t.”

“*But I do*,” Carl said, mimicking his tone before stepping closer, trying to intimidate with his bulk. “I know because I’ve been out there. I know because I’m not a coward,” his expression turned sharp and cruel. “Besides, these walls you love so much didn’t save all of us, did they? Or have you already forgotten Mom and Shane? But shit, look who I’m asking? We’re not even supposed to say their names anymore. It hurts too much, right Dad?”

Rick felt like someone had kicked him in the stomach. He forced down all of the emotions he refused to face and tipped his face up to look at his boy. “I don’t want you to leave.”

For a brief moment something seemed to soften in Carl’s expression. He took a step back before gripping Rick by the shoulder. “I know you don’t, but I’ve got to Dad. There are things out there that aren’t going away. The world’s changing.”

He was losing him. God help him but he was losing his boy and there wasn’t anything he could do to stop it. “You don’t have to go,” he

said, aware he was repeating everything he'd already said. He reached out, latching onto Carl's wrist. "It's safe here. You're safe here -"

He didn't fight when Carl pushed him gently aside but he wouldn't let go of his wrist. *He couldn't.*

"I know you can't understand this Dad, but it's not safe, not yet. There are people out there, groups forming that aren't like the people here in Alexandria. If we stay as we are, unprotected, well we're all as good as dead," he reached out and gently prised Rick's fingers from around his wrist. "But I promise it's going to be OK. I'm doing this for you. For you and Judith," he pressed his forehead against Rick's before enveloping in him a tight hug. "Just, look after yourself until I get back, OK?"

Rick opened his mouth, a final plea on his tongue that he couldn't seem to force past his lips. Carl opened the back door and stepped out onto the porch, an arsenal of guns strapped to his waist and back. For the first time in his life, when Rick looked at him, he didn't see his boy anymore. He saw a man, one that had grown up in the new world. A world full of cruel, unforgiving people who didn't care about the old laws, about order or compassion.

For the first time Rick really saw his son. Carl would thrive in the new world. And it broke his goddamn heart.

****

Rick glanced at Judith as his little girl happily played with her new homemade doll. A few pieces of cake sat on the worktop, leftovers from the small party they'd had earlier that day. Rick couldn't help but smile. It wasn't that long ago that he worried his daughter wouldn't live to see her first birthday and now he had a happy, healthy four year old.

He felt peaceful. Relaxed and happy for the first time since Carl left. The boy had been gone for almost six months. It was by far the longest he had ever been away from Rick. Not a day passed where he didn't think of him, but at that moment, he wanted to just enjoy his little girl.

He should have known better.

The alarm sounded, deafening and heralding the approach of some very bad things. Rick stood slowly, blinking at Judith stupidly before self preservation kicked in and he scooped the little girl up in his

arms.

“Hey sweetie, we’re going to visit auntie Carol. OK?”

“I’m sleepy daddy,” she said, her eyes wide. “What’s that noise?”

“Someone set off the alarm. I’ve got to go switch it off. You can sleep at auntie Carol’s OK.”

She grumbled but thankfully didn’t put up too much of a fuss as Rick hurried to Carol’s home. He knocked the door a few times and was beyond relieved when she answered.

“Hey,” he said, all but shoving Judith into her arms. “Would you mind?”

“Of course not,” she answered, her face drawn with worry. Sophia peered around her mother’s shoulder, her pointed face filled with concern.

“Do you know what’s going on?” she asked anxiously.

“Not yet. I’m going to go check it out,” he paused for a moment before pressing a kiss on his little girls crown. “Go hide in the basement until I come get you. OK?”

“Ed told us to get dinner ready,” Carol said worriedly.

“I’ll handle Ed. Please Carol.”

She nodded her head slowly before gently shutting the door. Rick hesitated for a moment before turning towards the main gate. He broke into a full out sprint, only slowing down when he caught up with Glenn.

“Hey,” the younger man said, his expressio serious. “Any idea what’s going on?”

“Not yet. Maybe a herd.”

“How’d they get this close without us noticing?”

Rick didn’t have the answer. He just knew that the alarm hadn’t sounded in over two years. Whatever had caused it to ring out couldn’t be good.

When they reached the gate there was already twenty other people on

the wall. They had their guns drawn and pointed out but no one was firing.

“Michonne,” Rick said, grabbing her arm. The look she gave him immediately made him let go. Sometimes he forgot that the woman was still a little...wild. “Do you know what’s happening?”

“Intruders,” was her only response.

Rick shared a brief look with Glenn before grabbing a riffle and climbing the wall. He'd barely made it onto the platform when a man approached the gate, a barbed wire-covered bat swinging casually at his side. He was tall and thick shouldered. His hair was pitch black. He was smiling.

He introduced himself as Negan, waiting expectantly. When it was clear no one recognised his name he threw his head back and released a booming laugh. He seemed unhinged and Rick felt his grip on the rifle instinctively tighten.

Negan introduced them as the Saviours. A rough and dangerous looking group of men and women clearly hardened by the doubtless atrocities they would have experienced in order to survive. Deanna faced them, head held high and outwardly unafraid. The rest of the town wasn’t faring as well, with many of the residents either hiding in their homes or near pissing themselves out on the main road.

Rick stood at the west wall, rifle in hand as he watched the saviour army settle at their front gate. He couldn’t remember the last time he had seen so many people and cars in one place and the realisation of how fucked they were left him momentarily dizzy.

“And you’re the person in charge I take it little lady?” He asked, swinging the bat up towards Deanna.

To her credit she didn’t flinch.

“This is my town,” she agreed, her expression hardening.

“And a damn fine town too no doubt. How about you open up these gates and let me and my people have a little looksy?”

“No,” she said. Simple and direct. That was Deanna.

Negan raised his rifle and pointed it at her. “I don’t like killing ladies. Puts me in a hell of a bad mood. But do not think for an instant that I

will hesitate to shoot you in your goddamn face if you try to cross me. Now I'll give you a second chance. I encourage you to look at my people and the very big guns they're holding. And I will ask you again. Open the goddamn gate."

"If you shoot her I shoot you," Rick said, the words bursting unbidden from his lips as he took aim. At least twenty guns turned in his direction. Jesus, he was going to die.

Negan barely spared Rick a glance as he looked back at Deanna. "Look like shit's about to go down. What'll be lady? You ready to play ball or are we about to have a shootout?"

"What's stopping you from killing us if we lower the gates?"

A good question, Rick thought as he tried to blink away the sweat pouring into his eyes. *A really good fucking question.*

Negan threw her a million watt smile. "Well sweetheart. I guess you're just going to have to trust me."

They didn't have a choice. He realised that. They all did, but he couldn't help but feel betrayed when the gate was pulled open and a large group of rough looking men and women came into their home.

He climbed down from the wall and fell into place beside Glenn, a little way behind their leader. He had to admire her courage. Negan was a head and a half taller than she was but she didn't shy away from him when he stepped way too close to her.

The man loomed.

Rick didn't miss the way Negan's gaze locked onto him. The saviour knew he was the one who threatened to shoot him then.

Great. Just fucking great.

"Don't mind them," Negan said jovially as he lifted the bat and swept it downwards. His people instantly rushed past him, towards the town. "They're just going to take stock of what we've got in this here pretty town of yours," his smiling face turned in Rick's direction. "So, who wants to show me around?"

It was inevitable. He heard a shot ring out and immediate screaming. Rick took off at a sprint and fell to his knees beside Andrea. Her gun lay next to her on the ground. She was bleeding from a nasty gunshot

wound to the gut.

“You’re gonna be OK,” he promised, pressing down on the wound as he looked around desperately for help. “*Denise*! Where the hell is Denise?”

The person screaming was Amy. She was being held back by some of the townfolk but her anguish was piercing. Rick pressed down harder.

“The fucking bitch shot me,” Rick heard someone say a second before he felt a hand fist into his shirt and damn near drag him clean off the ground. He was thrown to the floor and could only gape as Negan looked down at him. His smile was missing as he turned to the Saviour lying a few feet away.

“She shot you. Why?”

“Told me I couldn’t go into her house. I went in anyway and the bitch shot me in the leg.”

“I was aiming for your fucking head,” Andrea snarled. Blood bubbled out of her mouth and onto her chin. Not a good sign. Where the hell was Denise?

“Well thank fuck for Simon that you’re a lousy shot sweetheart,” Negan mocked as he looked down at the blonde woman. He picked up Andrea’s gun and put in his waistband before turning to face the crowd. His expression, if possible, turned even more serious. “Now I need you pissants to realise something real fucking fast. I’m not an unreasonable man. Don’t get me wrong. I am taking control of your little town here, but if you all do as you’re told you’re not going to get hurt. However, if one of you hurts one of my men then I’ve got to take the necessary steps to deter that shit. *And so* -”

He lifted the bat. Rick honestly didn’t register what he was going to do until it smashed down on Andrea’s head. He did it again *and again* until she fell completely still.

Silence permeated the air for a few seconds before Amy’s anguished scream pierced the quite. People started crying out. They were about to break into a panic.

Negan lifted his gun and shot it into the air. “Everyone calm the fuck down," he shouted, waving the gun threateningly. "All of you go to the town centre. Now, before Lucille here decides to go on a blood spree.”

Rick couldn't look away from Andrea. They had been together since the beginning. She was one of his closest friends and she had been murdered literally right in front of him. Amy was still screaming. Aaron and Eric were pulling her away but she was fighting them. Negan looked in her direction and frowned.

Rick was up and moving before he could think through his actions. He jumped in front of the Saviour leader and spread his arms wide. "They're sisters," he said, desperate to make him understand. "Please, she harmless. Don't."

"I wasn't going to," Negan said and he actually sounded a little upset by the accusation. His eyes narrowed then and the smile reappeared on his face. "I do not think you and I have had the pleasure. What was your name again?"

"Rick," he answered shortly, resisting the urge to make sure Amy wasn't in the firing line.

"Rick what?" he asked, smirking.

"Grimes," he said between gritted teeth.

Negan's eyes widened slightly before he very slowly looked Rick up and down. The shit eating grin was back. "That a fact?"

****

There weren't too many pretty men left alive, that was for sure. And Rick sure was a pretty man. The beard was clearly an attempt to make him look more dangerous, but there was no disguising the softly curling hair, a mouth made for cock sucking and cheekbones that could cut glass. There was something achingly beautiful about the way Rick's storm blue eyes sparkled with unshed tears. Hell, if he knew any poetry he'd write a thousand fucking sonnets about those baby blues alone. Jesus-fuck, Negan thought he might actually be in love.

He wanted him. Plain and simple. Shame Rick wasn't going to play ball. Not without some persuasion at least.

Too bad the other man absolutely hated his moterfucking guts. Negan could see it, in every look and each and every plea to spare the lives of his people. Negan had to admit he wasn't helping matters as he went out of his way to threaten and intimidate everyone they came

across. He wasn't doing it on purpose. He had to make these people realise that their lives were changing. Negan owned them, plain and simple.

Rick kept trying to pull away whenever he thought Negan was distracted. He couldn't have that so he eventually grabbed the smaller mans hand, entwining their fingers together and holding on a little more tightly than strictly necessary. At first Rick just looked confused and then he looked pissed.

"What are you doing?" he hissed, tugging. He wasn't weak, not even close, but Negan had a good six inches of height and thirty pounds on the other man. Unless he intended to get a hell of a lot more violent Negan wasn't letting go.

"We're taking a stroll sweetheart," he said as if it was the most obvious thing in the world.

Rick looked like he wanted to murder him.

Nope, he decided. *Not going to let this one go for a long time.*

Chapter 2: Weak

Chapter Notes

Happy New Year!

I've written another little chapter before work and uni start up again!

Rick considered his options. He was confident that, given enough effort, he would be able to break free. The only issue he had was that once he managed to snatch his hand back there wasn't a whole lot more he'd be able to do if the other man decided to take a swing at him. Not unless he wanted to try and kill Negan first.

And as a result I'll likely watch my people slaughtered, he thought a little helplessly. No, as much as it infuriated him he needed to suck it up and not react.

"So Rick, what is it you do here exactly?"

He debated not answering. Part of him felt he wouldn't be able to speak without screaming in the other man's face. *Jesus*, he thought, *poor Andrea*. She didn't deserve to die that way. She had been so strong, especially for Amy. The two of them were inseparable. It was going to kill the kid.

His hand received a firm squeeze, just shy of painful. A reminder that the other man was waiting for an answer. "Hey Rick, you wouldn't be ignoring me would you?"

"I go on runs, help protect the town," Rick said automatically. He looked up briefly to meet Negan's smirking face before quickly turning away. He felt his free fist clench and reminded himself that no matter how satisfying it would be to wipe the smirk of Negan's face he needed to stay alive for his little girl. "I do what I have to for the town."

"I bet you do?" Negan said, somehow making the words sound sleezy. "You ever had to kill anyone?"

Rick felt his entire body tense up before he took a small breath, forcing himself to relax and meet Negan's eyes. "Before all of this started I was a deputy."

“And?”

“And yes, I’ve killed people before. When I needed to.”

“And what about since you left the force?” Negan whispered, as if they were sharing a secret. He was way, way too close. Didn’t the man understand the concept of personal space?

“Not for a very long time.”

“Not had the need?” Negan asked, grinning widely.

Negan saw the Alexandrians and the way they lived, so similar to their lives before everything turned to hell, and clearly compared them to his battle hardened Saviours. It was clear he counted RIck among the Alexandrians. Negan thought they were weak. *He thought Rick was weak*. “This is a peaceful town. It’s just been us for a very long time. So no, there hasn’t been the need.”

“You’ve been lucky,” Negan noted, pulling Rick a little closer when the shorter man tried to pull away. “It’s frankly a miracle no ones tried to come and take it away from you.”

“Not until now,” Rick mumbled as he saw the welcome sight of Deanna striding towards them. She looked about as bad as he felt, with red rimmed eyes and tangled hair. Michonne trailed a little way behind the other woman, her eyes flashing dangerously.

“You killed one of my people,” she accused the moment she was in earshot. “Andrea was a good woman. A friend of mine. She didn’t deserve -”

“She was an idiot,” Negan interrupted, a serious look on his face. “She shot one of my men. Now let me ask you something -” he broke off abruptly before tugging Rick against his side and bending down to whisper in his ear. “This is real fucking embarrassing Rick so I’m going to have to ask you to do me a solid here and not make a big deal. What’s leader ladies name again?”

Rick genuinely thought his eyes might pop out of his head. He tried to pull away and received a bone crushing squeeze in response. “Deanna,” he said between gritted teeth.

“Deanna,” Negan boomed, straightening up and smiling triumphantly at Rick’s leader. “Don’t mind us. Rick and I were just having a little chat.”

“Has he done something?” She asked, her eyes lingering on their entwined fingers with a worried frown.

“Nope. Not a thing.” Negan answered happily.

“Then I would appreciate it if you’d let him go. He’s clearly uncomfortable.”

Negan looked down at Rick as if noticing him for the first time. He frowned slightly at their joined hands before shrugging and letting the smaller man go with a flourish. “Sure thing boss lady. After all, I wouldn’t want to think I’m not a gentleman..”

Deanna continued to look at Rick before slowly pointing behind her. “Go back to the main gate,” she ordered.

RIck hesitated for a moment. “I don’t think -”

“Go on,” she interrupted, her expression hard. “Negan and I will be there shortly.”

****

“Obedient little thing ain’t he?” Negan noted with a huge grin as he watched the pretty sheriff walk away. Damn, did the man have a fine trim little waist and a truly fucking delciatable a-

“You didn’t need to kill her,” Deanna said, interrupting his trail of thought. And oh, they were still talking about the dead girl.

“She shot one my men. By her own omission she was aiming for his head. How the hell do you expect me to act when faced with that level of aggression?”

Damn, the fucking Samurai lady looked like she was about to gut him. The fucking woman was a terrifying as she was beautiful.

“Andrea was scared. If you never came here she never would have shot any of you. This is your fault.”

Negan had to give to the little lady, she was the size of a pea but she sure had some stones. “Look, you may not like it but from now on, if your people draw a gun on my people, my people will make your people a hell of a lot more dead. Comprendo?”

She stared at him with absolute fucking hatred in her eyes but was smart enough not to argue the matter further. Clever woman.

“So what now?” She asked, trying to keep the hatred from her tone with minimal success.

“Now, we take stock of what we’ve got here and you and I have a nice chat about how you and your little town can start pulling your weight for the greater community. But don’t be thinking you don’t get anything out of the little agreement. Oh no, you’re gonna be under our protection from now on. That means that you don’t have to worry about any of those other big bads out there trying to take what don’t belong to them,” he clapped enthusiastically. “Whoo, but are we going to make one hell of a team.”

****

Chapter 3: Family

“Hey Rick. What you got there?”

Rick was exhausted. He’d been mending fences all day and the sun had been beating down on him since sunrise. The last thing he wanted was to deal with was Negan’s particular brand of bullshit.

“Come again?” He asked, purposefully keeping his back turned as he surveyed his work.

“In your hand. She have a name?”

He meant the hammer, Rick realised with an inward grimace. “It’s just a tool.”

“You ever kill anyone with it?”

Despite himself, Rick turned around to look at him. “You mean, like a walker?”

“Sure,” Negan said with his signature shit-eating grin. “Just like a walker,” he rocked back and forth on his heels, surveying the area. “So is this what you do all day?”

“Among other things,” Rick said, striding past the other man to get a drink. He took a couple of deep swallows before letting some of the water pour over his face. He shook his head, shaking the excess water off his face and hair.

He startled a little when he realised how intently the other man was looking at him. Something inside Rick lurched uncomfortably.

“Fuck me sideways Rick,” Negan said, hefting the damned bat as he looked Rick up and down slowly. “Are you doing it on purpose?”

“What?” Rick literally couldn’t understand anything the other man said.

“Are you doing it on purpose?” he repeated, slow and deliberate.

It was hard not to show his impatience, but he managed to reign it his frustration by gritting his teeth. “Am I doing what on purpose?”

Negan stepped close to him. Way too close. The man loomed. “Are

you trying to make my dick hard, or are you really just incredibly naive?"

Rick realised his mouth was hanging open and closed it with an audible click. He stumbled back, slowly getting angry.

"What?" he hissed.

Negan wasn't smiling anymore. His expression had grown dangerous. "You want to put that down, sweetcheeks?"

It took Rick a moment to realise that had his hammer raised defensively in front of him. He remembered Andrea but he couldn't quite make himself let go.

"I ain't interested."

"No shit," Negan crowded, his grin back. It was edged now. Dangerous. "Rick, put down the hammer."

Rick stumbled back a few more steps in an attempt to put distance between them. He wasn't too far from the town centre. If he started hollering someone would hear. "I'm leaving."

"I hate to be the one to break this to you sweet cheeks, but you're not going fucking anywhere until I say so. You and I, we're going to have us a nice old little chat. Man to man."

"About what?" Rick asked, voice strained.

"Uh-uh. First, put down the hammer."

Rick inwardly debated with himself before slowly lowering the hammer to his side.

"Drop it."

He could run, but Negan was carrying. If he stayed he reasoned there was a good chance he was going to get his brains caved in.

"Last chance, darlin', Negan growled.

The hammer fell from Rick's numb fingers.

"Thank fuck," Negan boomed. "That shit was getting intense and I'd really hate to fuck up that pretty face of yours."

Rick took a fortifying breath before meeting the other man's eyes. “I said I ain’t interested. I don’t know what that means among the saviours, but among us, it means back off. I don’t know how to say it any clearer.”

“No need,” Negan said, stepping forward. Rick planted his feet, refusing to back down. “However, there aren’t rules stating I’m not allowed to talk to my people, is there? And as far as I can tell, I haven’t hurt a single curly hair on your pretty little head. So, unless you’re telling me that my compliments are upsetting your delicate sensibilities, Rick, I suggest you calm the fuck down.

They stared into one another's eyes for a long moment before Rick dropped his gaze. “Can I go?”

“Not yet,” Negan said and he sounded a little pissed. “I’m having a little wander around the town. I want you to come with me.”

“Why?”

“Because I told you to, that’s why,” he said, taking a firm hold of Rick’s wrist and tugging sharply. Rick stumbled a little before righting himself, glaring fiercely at the other man. “So tell me a little about yourself, Rick.”

“Ain’t much to tell,” he said, trying to subtly pull his arm free. Negan was not letting go.

“You got a wife?”

“No,”

“A husband?”

“No,” Rick hissed.

“Girlfriend, boyfriend, causal fuckbuddy?”

Rick tried to yank his arm free and Negan just laughed at him. “How about kids. Rick. You got any of those?”

"No," he said, a little to quickly.

He gasped when he was spun around and Negan took a bruising hold of his chin. “You wouldn’t be lying to me, would you sweetheart? You know what happens when you bullshit me, don’t you?”

Rick thought his heart was going to beat out of his chest. Negan already knew and was offering him an out. Rick didn't want to think about what would happen if he lied to the other man. "I got a boy and a girl."

"Jesus, you manage to keep two alive through all of this? You're luckier than most, Rick."

"I know that," he said, pulling back a little. "Let go."

"I will," Negan said, pressing closer. "Just don't ever lie to me again. OK sweetheart?"

"I don't owe you my loyalty," Rick snapped, pulling back hard enough that he escaped the other man's grasp. "You don't own us."

"You really think that?" the big man boomed, finally stepping back and putting some much-needed space between them/. "Jesus fuck, beautiful. I thought you were smarter than that. Still, I guess you can't have looks and brains."

"Can I go now?" Rick asked, barely resisting the urge to punch Negan in his dumb chipmunk face.

"Sure, let's both head back to your place. I'd love to meet your kids. See just what a pair of little Rick's look like."

"No," he said, stopping and planting his feet.

"Wasn't really asking, Rick."

Chapter 4: Home

Chapter Notes

> Sorry it's been a while. Here's a short chapter until I get back into the swing of things :)

Rick hesitated when they reached a pretty little house, indiscernible from any other on the street. He didn't say anything but his reaction told Negan all he needed to know. Bingo. "Well ain't this as quaint as fuck," he boomed, enjoying the way it made the other man tense beside him. "Seriously, Rick. This is one sweet set up you got here. I can't wait to get inside."

"I said no."

"And I already said it wasn't up for discussion. Now get your cute little ass up those stairs before I break down the goddamn door."

Negan genuinely thought he was going to need to hurt Rick to make him move, but then the little bastard squared his shoulders and proceeded Negan up the driveway. He opened the unlocked door and stepped inside.

"Sophia," he called, his voice suddenly soft and gentle. The southerner sure had a sweet voice when it suited him.

"Hey Rick," a girl said, blonde and gangly. She walked into the room with a toddler wrapped in her arms and almost fell over herself when she saw Negan. "A-are you OK?"

"I'm fine," he said, taking the squirming infant from her arms. He smiled softly at the little girl, almost hunching over her to keep her out of Negan's sight. "Hey sweetie."

"Daddy," she squealed, nuzzling into his chest. She was a little thing with big brown eyes and golden curls. She spared Negan an unimpressed look before turning back to her dad.

"Thanks Sophia," Rick said, turning back to the girl and wrapping his arm around her waist, steering her towards the door. "I'll see you later, OK?"

"But Rick," she said, turning urgent, frightened eyes back to Negan before ducking her head. "I don't think -"

“Later, Sophia,” he said, pushing her gently through the front door and closing it firmly behind him. He turned back to Negan and pulled the kid a little closer into his chest. “You satisfied now?”

“Not even close,” Negan said, stepping past him and collapsing onto the sofa. “Sure if a nice place you got here, Rick. Being the boss has it perks, huh?”

“All the houses here are like this,” Rick grumbled, still standing awkwardly in the doorway. He started to fidget and the kid, picking up on his unease started to fuss.

“You may as well sit down, sweet cheeks. I ain’t going anywhere for awhile.”

It wasn’t a suggestion and they both knew it. Rick slowly and reluctantly planted his ass on the sofa. The kid instantly tried to wriggle out of his arms but Rick wasn’t letting go.

“What’s your name princess?” Negan finally asked, gaining the kids attention. She blinked inquisitively and turned to look more fully at him.

“Her name is Judith,” Rick said, shying away when Negan twirled a golden curl around his finger. “She’s a little shy around strangers.”

Negan shrugged and pulled his hand back. “You said you got a boy too?”

The southerner stiffened visibly, falling back against the couch with a strange look on his face. “He isn’t here.”

“No? But he’s alive right?”

Rick gave him a pointed look. “Yeah, he’s alive.”

Fuck -- it was like trying to get blood out of a Goddamn stone. “So where is he now, Rick?”

“Somewhere else. Somewhere that isn’t here.”

Negan smirked widely. “You telling me you lost your kid. Not very responsible.”

“He can take care of himself,” Rick said, standing up. “Judith needs her nap. I’m gonna put her down.”

He wasn't asking for permission but Negan noted the way the other man didn't move until Negan gave a sharp nod of his head. He liked that -- sure, Rick wasn't falling into line as quickly as he might prefer, but he had enough sense to realise that Negan was dangerous. Rick was scared of him, even if he was doing a good job of not outright pissing in his panties.

A couple of minutes later Negan heard the kid start squalling. She quietened down quickly enough but it was a while before Rick came back downstairs. Negan busied himself by propping his feet up on Rick's fancy coffee table and flicking through some photo albums.

There were lots of pictures of Rick, young and painfully soft looking. A tall, thin woman was usually posing beside him. She had a serious face and pretty long brown hair. As he flicked through the photos an infant appeared, slowly growing into a child and then an adolescent.

Negan would have recognised the little fucker anywhere.

"What are you doing with that?" Rick asked, stepping into the room with the familiar frown on his face. He moved closer to Negan, his hand outstretched. "That's mine."

"That a fact?" Negan asked, standing up and holding the book above his head. He had several inches on Rick and knew the other man didn't have a chance in hell of reaching the book with his dignity still in tact. "Well considering this little town of yours now belongs to me, including everything in it, I might argue that this is actually mine, sweet cheeks."

Negan registered the look in the smaller mans eyes a second before he attacked.

Chapter 5: Behave

He wasn't sure what made the Alexandrian snap. To date, regardless of how much Negan pushed his buttons, pretty Rick had been the perfectly behaved little bootlicker. Seeing him freak the fuck out, over a photo album of all things, was as unexpected as it was thrilling.

Negan fell back with a grunt when Rick's smaller mass slammed into him. He tensed, expecting a punch or worse, when he realised the younger man was more interested in reaching for the album. In fact, he seemed almost frantic. Negan couldn't help but file that little titbit away as he laughingly fell back.

"That isn't yours," Rick snarled furiously, reaching desperately. "*And neither am I.* You don't own me, you bastard. You don't own any of us."

"Goddamn Rick," Negan said, drawing back the album and slamming it hard against the smaller man's gut. Rick's eyes went wide as he crumpled to his knees, winded and clearly hurting. "You really are furthering the stereotype that pretty people are dumb as fuck, you know that?" he brought the album down on Rick's head and knocked him flat on his stomach. "You wanna keep going? Cause I am more than happy to beat you with an inch of your everfucking life. I'm pretty good too -- I'll make sure I don't mess up that face of yours, but you can sure as fuck bet you'll be pissing blood for the next week."

Rick wasn't moving. Negan had to wonder if he'd finally got the message. He was glad too. Despite his threats he didn't want to really hurt Rick. At least not bad enough that he risked permanently damaging him.

"You calm now?"

"Fuck you," the southerner snarled breathlessly.

He wasn't backing down, which was a genuine surprise considering he had to be hurting. Negan considered his options. What was the quickest way to shut his shit down without breaking something. "You really wanna do this here, Rick? With your kid just upstairs?"

The southerner froze before tensing up and clenching his fists. "If you hurt her, I'll fucking kill you. I swear to god. *I'll kill you.*"

“You ain't killing shit,” Negan said, crouching down and grasping a firm handful on Rick’s pretty curls. He jerked the smaller mans head back before slamming his head into the wooden flooring. “You wanna know why, sweetheart?” Rick didn’t say anything, clearly dazed by the blow so Negan used his hold on his hair to force him on his back. Rick’s hazy gaze managed to focus on him before he glared darkly. Negan repressed a smile -- the little bitch really was full of surprises. “Answer me when I goddamn well talk to you.”

“I - I don’t...” he stuttered, attempting to pull away.

“I said you ain’t doing shit, Rick. And I asked you if you knew why?”

“No,” Rick said between gritted teeth. “Why?”

“Well I’m just tickled fucking pink that you asked. You see, if you do something to piss me off, I will roundup some of your little friends and I’ll start cutting off limbs. I ain’t got a problem hurting kids either, and seeing as you have two of em’ -”

“No,” Rick hissed, struggling to dislodge Negan’s grasp.” Don’t - don’t fucking don’t touch them. *Don’t hurt her*.”

“I won’t,” he said, easing up and running a soft hand down Rick’s cheek. “Providing you can behave for me, Rick. Can you do that for me sweetheart? Can you behave?”

He saw the realisation spark in Rick’s eyes -- the anger and hatred. It made something dark and cruel swell up inside of Negan. He wrapped his hand around Rick’s throat, pressing down with just the slightest bit of pressure. The southerners gorgeous blue eyes widened in shock but, just as Negan suspected, he didn’t try to struggle away.

“Answer the question, sweetheart.”

Negan felt Rick’s adam's apple bob under his grip as the southerner visibly tried to collect himself. “You can’t do this.”

“I gotta assume you ain’t been paying attention, sweet thing. I can do whatever the fuck I want.”

“You’re not going to hurt my girl.”

“I really don’t want to, Rick,” Negan said, shifting until he was almost entirely bracketing the smaller man. “I don’t like hurting women and I sure as shit don’t like killing babies, especially when killing said baby

is gonna make you real fucking hard to control -- but I will. I'll do just about anything I need to survive. What's happening right here -- well I can promise you here and now that how this shit turns out is entirely down to you."

Rick's pretty eyes shuttered closed for a brief moment, but it was enough. *Negan had won.* "What do you want?"

"I'm so fucking glad you asked," the saviour stood up, dragging Rick after him. He pushed him flush against the wall and took a firm hold of his face. "You see, I like you Rick. You got a fucking beautiful face and an ass that just won't quit. I'd like us to get to know each other a little better."

"I already told you I ain't interested."

"Yeah, you did," Negan agreed, pressing his lips against Rick's throat. "And I ain't gonna force you, baby. I'm not a rapist. So here it is, you got a choice. You can say no, and I'll leave. Or you can say yes and I'll give you my word that you and you're little family will be taken care of."

"You threatened my girl. My friends -"

Negan bit down, *hard*. Rick jerked and tensed, but he didn't try to pull away. "Yeah, that's right. I did."

He could feel the fine tremors running through the southerners body. It was sensuous as fuck. "You're a monster."

Negan allowed his lips twitch into a smile against Rick's skin. "Welcome to the new world, sweetheart," he said, laughing and stepping back. "So here's the deal. I'm going to go now, and you're going to calm the fuck down, and, next time I come back you're going to be sweet to me," he reached out and gently fondled the southerners curls. "You understand?"

Two bright blue eyes turned up to look at him, full of pain, fear and anguish. Negan soaked it up, grinning brightly.

"I don't like fucking repeating myself, Rick. Now I'm only gonna ask you one more time. Do you understand me?"

"Yes," the southerner whispered, his eyes downcast. "I understand."

Totally fucking cowed.

“Good boy. Oh, and Rick?” he bent down, picked up the photo album and brandished in front of the smaller mans face. “I’ll be keeping this.”

“No,” Rick said, jolting forward before abruptly flinching back. “*Please* -- it’s all I have.”

“Then I’ll be real sure to take care of it for you,” he said sweetly, patting Rick’s face before stepping back. “See you around, beautiful.”

Chapter 6: Trapped

Rick stumbled into Judith's room and shut the door as softly as his trembling hands would allow. He fell back against the solid presence of the wood and slid slowly on to his ass. Judith was fast asleep in her little bed, out cold in the way only the very young could accomplish.

"Fuck," he whispered, running his fingers through his hair and trying, frantically, to come up with something, *anything* he could do to stop the other man. It felt surreal -- it was wrong. He was a man, grown and fully capable of defending himself. He used to be a cop for fuck sake. How could he allow another man to...to just -

He could tell the others -- tell Deanna. His people would try to defend him, perhaps hide him until Negan lost interest -- but there were so many associated risks. The saviour said he would hurt Judith, an innocent little girl. What would he do to the people of Alexandria if Rick just disappeared?

And really, where would he go? Outside, with a four year old. They wouldn't last a week.

He pressed his head against his knees and just tried to breathe. He thought of Andrea, her face an unrecognisable lump of bloody meet and bone. He couldn't watch that happen to Glenn, or Maggie. He couldn't watch that happen to anyone else.

"Fuck," he gasped, feeling unbearably and irrevocably helpless. There was nothing he could do to stop it.

He couldn't stop it.

He wasn't sure how long he sat there, silently despairing and trying not to panic. The sound of his door being knocked didn't register at first, but when it did Rick felt his heart jump into his throat. Was he back already?

No -- if the man returned he wouldn't do something as mundane as knock. It wasn't him. They were safe, for now.

Rick stood up, feeling shaky and sick. It was a struggle to reach the front door and pull it open. When he found Sophia and Carol stood on his threshold he couldn't help but close his eyes in relief.

“Rick,” Carol said, her voice hushed and clearly concerned. “Are you OK?”

“Yeah,” he said, sagging a little against the door frame. “I’m fine. Is everything OK?”

“Sophia said she saw Negan in your house. We thought -” she broke off, clearly having expected the worst.

“I’m OK,” he promised, feeling anything but. “Is he gone?”

“Left about twenty minutes ago,” she confirmed, frowning delicately. “Did he...did he hurt you?”

He shook his head numbly. “No - no he just, strutted around. Made threats. You know?”

She nodded but her frown became more pronounced. “He’s been harassing you, hasn’t he? Have you told Deanna?”

“There’s nothing to tell,” he said, feeling heat start to creep up into his face. *Jesus, did they already suspect*? “He’s just messing with me. I can handle it.”

Carol pursed her lips and turned back to Sophia. “Honey, go finish getting supper ready for me, OK?”

“Yeah,” the girl said, still looking all sorts of concerned. “OK mom. See you tomorrow Rick.”

He waved goodbye woodenly and turned back to Carol with a feeling of unease. “What’s up?”

“Come on now Rick,” she said in a low, soft voice. “I know what it looks like when someone's hiding something. Tell me truthfully, did he hurt you?”

It pained him that she had just basically admitted her husband abused her. Everyone already knew of course, but there wasn’t much that could be done about it. Not when Carol so vehemently defended her husbands behaviour.

“It ain’t like that.”

“Hell is isn’t,” she said, her voice surprisingly strong as she took a step forward. “You have to tell Deanna. If you don’t and she finds out after he hurts you we could have an all out war on our hands.”

“There ain’t anything she can do, Carol,” he hissed, fighting his temper as she continued to stare earnestly back at him. “Just look at what he did to Andrea.”

“Andrea shot first. But you haven’t done anything to him, Rick. He hasn’t got any right to harass you like this. Please, just -”

Rick caught movement from the corner of his eye a moment before Ed’s voice came bellowing down at them.

“What the hell you doin’ over there?” he demanded, his hands crossed across his bullish chest as he stared at them from his porch. “It’s supper time and I ain’t fed yet.”

Carol’s entire demeanour changed. She bowed her head and skittered back from Rick. “I’m on way, honey. Just coming now.”

“Well hurry the hell up. I ain’t got all day to wait on you.”

She spared Rick one last harried look before rushing back to her house. Rick watched her through slitted eyes, noticing the way she flinched a little when she passed her husband. Ed caught him watching and raised his arm in casual greeting.

Rick didn’t return the gesture. He stepped back into the relative safety of his house and closed the door behind him.

“Fuck,” he whispered.

Chapter 7: Up High

“You know what I like most about you Rick?” Negan asked, stepping into the smaller man’s space and feeling all kinds of satisfied when he fell back a step in retreat. The sheriff was terrified of him. Oh, he managed to hide it well enough but the fear was there, clear as day if you knew what you were looking for. “You know how to listen, unlike some of the the dumb fucks following you around like a lost puppy.” he ducked down until he was in the southerners space and poked him hard in the chest. “The boss lady sure as hell isn’t listening, that’s for fucking sure.”

“She’s trying. *We’re all trying,*” the Alexandrian looked strung out and nervous. Negan could see Rick’s people staring after the little sheriff, their concern and fear almost tangible.

“You didn’t share our agreement with your little friends did you sweetheart?”

Startlingly blue eyes flickered up momentarily, filled with loathing and caution. “They’re worried about me.”

“Not answering the question sweetcheeks.”

Rick’s teeth clenched so hard it was a wonder they didn’t crack. “No, I didn’t tell them, but they’ve got eyes. They know somethings up.”

“How do you think they’re going to react when they find out we’re fucking?” Negan asked, keeping his voice low but jovial. When Rick didn’t say anything Negan reached out and grabbed his face. He saw the shock in the other man's eyes and purposefully dragged him closer. From the corner of his eye he watched the Alexandrian’s shift uncomfortably. “Because I can promise you that there will be fucking. Sweet Jesus will there be fucking. I can barely wait to see what you look like, bent over and taking it up that sweet ass of yours. I stay awake at night just thinking about it,” he paused, sensing the tension building behind him. “Now I asked you a fucking question. What do you think they’re going to do?”

“What the hell do you think?,” Rick ground out, his hand latching onto Negan’s wrist. “They’re not going to like it. They’re going to panic.”

“Then you need to shut that shit down. If they move against me they

die. Understand?"

"You've already made yourself perfectly clear," Rick growled, pulling weakly. "Let go of me."

"You making demands of me sweetheart?"

Rick looked down at his feet and then turned back to Negan with a carefully neutral expression. "I can't calm things down if you refuse to let me go."

"But I like touching you."

Rick took a slow, seemingly calm breath. "If you want me to convince them not to act rashly then I'm going to need to talk to them. You keeping me pinned here is just going to panic everyone. Please let me go."

Negan allowed a slow, Cheshire grin to spread over his face as he let the smaller man go with a light shove. "Get to it sweetheart," he swiped RIck's ass as he walked away and heard the light gasps from the watching Alexandrian's. He turned to them, keeping the smile in place as he approached Deanna. "Hey boss lady -- you got a sec?"

It wasn't a request and they both knew it. She approached him unflinchingly with her head held high, damn near projecting superiority. Negan had go give it to her -- the woman sure as hell had some spit in her. He hoped he didn't have to kill her.

"You need to stop harassing Rick," she said immediately, not allowing Negan to speak. "Rick is a good, honest man. I won't let you hurt him. We won't stand by as you molest -"

"*Whoa*," Negan boomed, speaking over her as he raised Lucile over his right shoulder. "There seems to be some kind of misunderstanding here, boss lady. You see, Rick and I have an agreement. You can talk to him about it if you like -- I'm sure he'd love to tell you all about it. But let me make something clear. You do not tell me what to do. You sure as hell do not make demands of me or my people. You belong to me, each and every one of you. You got that?"

The small woman looked back at Rick as the southerner spoke animatedly to his people. He could see the way they kept looking back at Negan with a mixture of disgust, anger and fear.

"I'm not going to let you hurt us," the woman insisted, straightening

to her full, diminutive height. “My people depend on me to protect them. *All of them.*”

Negan nodded his head agreeably. It was too bad, especially when he had Rick so nicely cowed. “Hey guys,” he said, speaking into the comm. “Get up here, will ya.”

He stepped past the little lady and walked directly into the small gathered crowd. His people had given him a fairly decent overview of who was who. He hadn’t spoke directly to Deanna’s boy but he easily recognised the tall, handsome man.

It wasn’t such a hardship, truth be told. Negan had taken an instant dislike to the fucker after hearing the way he talked down to Rick. The kid thought he had the stones to boss around the towns sheriff when he looked like one of the softest sorry mother fuckers Negan had ever seen. The loss would be minimal but the impact would be huge.

“You know what,” he said, twirling Lucile in his hand. “I’m not sure I’ve properly made myself clear to you sorry mother fuckers. I guess it’s my own fault. I mean you can’t just go around threatening people all the time without following through. Fuckers get the wrong idea and think you’re all talk,” he turned back to Deanna, who seemed to be slowly realising what was going down. “Your boss lady here thinks it's OK to tell me what to do. *To tell me!”* he brought the bat down, near enough to Rick that the man stumbled back in clear terror. His people were already surrounding the small group, penning them in. “She thinks she gets to dictate to me what I do with my things. Now I sure as hell didn’t want to have to make this point but you sorry fuckers haven’t given me a choice.” He turned back to Deanna. “Just remember, this is on you.”

Spencer didn’t deserve Lucile -- and besides, Negan needed to make an impact. He drew back his knife and thrust it into the fuckers guts, twisting and dragging the blade through the meat of his belly. Spencer’s eyes widened in shock before he hit the ground and started screaming. He set off everyone else and suddenly there was bedlam as people tried to escape the tight circle of saviours.

Boss lady wasn’t screaming in hysterics like Negan imagined. Instead she dropped silently next to her son, trying to help him keep his guts off the road. She was whispering softly, trying to comfort the terrified young man.

It was time to put him out of his misery. He raised Lucile, fully

prepared to bring it down on Spencer's head when Rick came out of fucking nowhere and knocked him on his ass. He attempted to wrestle Lucile off Negan and ended up getting his hands shredded. Seconds later he was hauled away by the saviours.

"That was fucking dumb, sweetheart," he said as he raised Lucile up high.

Chapter 8: Off

Rick threw his arms protectively over his head, fully convinced he was about to be pummeled to death. He flinched violently when he heard the solid thud of struck fresh, accompanied by screaming and the clear sound of panic. He lowered his arms reluctantly and saw Spencer lying unmoving a few feet away. His face was an unrecognizable pulp and he was surrounded by a disturbingly large pool of blood.

Deanna was laid beside him, her hands hovering over her son's unmoving chest. She caught Rick's eyes, her expression full of the sort of anguish only the parent of a dead child could truly comprehend. He went to stand up, aware he was still very much in danger of being murdered when he felt a hand fist into the back of his shirt and drag him to his feet.

"Everyone calm the fuck down," the saviour screamed, shaking Rick like a rat as the saviours bullied the onlooking alexandrian's to their knees. "If you don't want my people here to fill you with bullets you will settle down!"

Other than the sound of muffled crying the street became eerily quiet. Negan let go of Rick's shirt and drew his arm around the smaller man's waist. Rick gripped the saviour's wrist with shaking hands. He wanted to struggle but his self-preservation was telling him to stay still and quiet. If he reacted now he was almost positive Negan would kill someone in retaliation. He looked at Spencer's mutilated corpse and felt a shock of horror. The kid had been a pain in the ass but he didn't deserve to die. Not so Negan could prove some fucked up point to the boy's mother.

"I didn't want to do that," Negan said, pointing the bat at the watching Alexandrian's. "Well, that's not entirely true -- the guy was a prick -- but I sure as hell don't want to have to do it again. So we're going to make a few things clear. First things first," Rick choked a little when Negan's hand moved up his chest and locked onto his throat. He was hoisted onto his toes and felt the bat press against his chest, threatening to rip his skin to shreds if he struggled. "Your little sheriff here, he belongs to me now. You want to fight me for him, go right ahead."

Rick...he couldn't believe it. No one was talking, no one was speaking. Why would they -- how could they -- when Negan would literally kill them for it. He didn't blame them but Jesus, he didn't want to go with

him. Negan was a madman and a murderer. He didn't -

"No takers? Great! I am so fucking glad I'm not going to have to kill anyone else today. Simon, take him."

Rick didn't entirely register what was happening until he was spun around and thrust into Simon's arms. The big man dragged Rick past the watching group and through the town, towards the main gates. Rick stumbled after him, disorientated and a little shellshocked. It was only when they passed through the gate and Simon pulled him towards one of Negan's cars that he realised what was happening.

"W-wait," Rick said, digging in his heels and pulling. "Stop! I'm not going with you. I'm not -"

"Bit late for that sweetheart," Simon said, grinning as Rick started to struggle. "You sure you want to fight us on this?" he gestured to Negan's people, falling into the various cars and RVs surrounding the town. "I promise it's not going to go well for you."

Rick went rigid and Simon took the opportunity to shove him into the back passenger seat. The man leaned over him and Rick flinched violently but he just grabbed the seatbelt and buckled him in. "Safety first," he said brightly.

Rick stared back at him with wide eyes before panic set in and he tried to rip the seatbelt free. He set his shaking hands to the task when the passenger-side door opened and Negan fell into the seat with a pleased whoop. He turned around and pierced Rick with a knowing gaze.

"Hey sweetheart. You comfy?"

"I can't go with you," Rick said instantly, his gaze darting to Simon as he folded his long body into the driver's seat and switched on the engine. "I've got a kid. I can't just leave her. I -"

"She'll be fine," Negan said brightly, twisting in his seat and settling the bat in the footrest next to Rick. The smaller man flinched back, horrified by the gore and hair he could see covering the bat. "Your little friends will make sure of that."

"Please," Rick said, aware he sounded absolutely wrecked. "I'm all she's got."

Negan frowned darkly and Rick instinctively shifted back against the

seat. He was so unpredictable it was impossible to tell what he was thinking. Would he kill him if he continued to argue? There was a very real possibility he would be murdered for saying the wrong thing. He felt sweat break out of his forehead and quickly dropped his gaze.

“You behave Rick and maybe your little girl will get to see you again. Fuck with me and things are going to go very badly for you. You hear me?”

“Yeah,” Rick said softly, aware Simon was staring at him in the rearview mirror. “I get it.”

“Good boy,” Negan boomed violently, causing Rick to startle badly. He twisted back round in his seat and put his feet on the dashboard. “Remember, Rick. You be sweet to me and I’ll be nice in return. Easy peasy.”

****

Pretty Rick wasn’t taking their impending nuptials too well. He was shaking bad enough that Negan couldn’t make himself go through with it, which was a damn shame because his dick was so hard it could cut fucking glass.

“Calm the fuck down,” Negan boomed, causing the man to flinch so bad he nearly fell off his chair. He looked up at Negan with huge, wide blue eyes and shook his head wordlessly.

“I’m sorry. I’m not -”

“Look Rick,” Negan said, grabbing the sheriffs arm and dragging him back to his seat. “I’m gonna make a deal with you. We’re not going to do anything tonight. It’s gonna be nice and civilised because I’m tired and I wanna relax. I can’t do that when you’re literally shaking like a leaf. So calm the fuck down. You hear me?”

“I hear you,” Rick said, looking up and meeting Negan’s eyes with a wild and somewhat lost expression. “But I don’t trust you.”

For some weird fucking reason that actually hurt a little. Negan shook it off and raised his arms above his head, stretching languidly as he looked down at the Alexandrian. “You ever been with a man before, Rick?” he decided to ask, all casual-like because why the fuck not.

Rick surprised him by springing up from the chair and sprinting for the door. Fuck knew where he thought he was going to go. Negan

barely caught him in time, spinning the man around and slamming up against the nearest wall. Rick let loose a delicious sounding whimper and then went still in Negan's gasp.

So much for calming the other man down.

"You going somewhere sweetheart?" he asked, flashing his toothiest grin.

He could see the colour drain out of Rick's face. "Get the hell away from me," he gasped, thrashing wildly in a ill-begotten attempt to break free.

Negan drew him away from the wall and then slammed him back with enough force to make Rick's head collide with a solid thud. The other man groaned softly and tried to curl in on himself. He practically stank of fear.

"That wasn't smart now RIck, was it," he said, digging his fingers into the meat of Rick's arms. The little sheriff had a set of guns on him, that was damn for sure. "You wanna tell me where you thought you were gonna go?"

"Get off me," Rick suddenly bellowed, pulling hard against his hold. He looked fucking furious. Negan felt a toothy grin break lose. He was wondering where the kid got all of his spit from. Seemed daddy had a paid or balls after all. "Let go of me."

Negan punched him hard in the gut and the smaller man crumpled with a whizzing grunt. Negan pulled him back up and grabbed his jaw, squeezing hard enough that he knew he was going to leave bruises. "You're not being smart, Rick. Stop fighting me."

Seemed pretty Rick was pretty fucking stupid. He kept fighting and Negan really was tired. It he wanted to play hardball so be it.

He pulled him away from the wall and opened his bedroom door. Dwight was standing guard. He straightened just as Negan thrust Rick into his arms.

"Take him to the stalls," he said, stepping back and slamming his door on the two of them. He heard Dwight curse and the sound of a struggle. Negan shrugged, turned on his TV and decided to get an early night.

Chapter 9: Stay

Chapter Notes

A wee chapter :)

The scarred man wasn't a particularly big guy -- he maybe had an inch or two on Rick -- but he sure knew how to play dirty. Negan had already beat the shit out of Rick three times over, so it only took a solid punch to the head and a few well-placed kicks to the ribs before he decided to call it quits and go limp.

The saviour tried to pull him to his feet, snarling and grumbling before he figured out that Rick wasn't *capable* of getting back up. He resorted to grabbing both of Rick's ankles and bodily dragged him down a long, empty corridor. It wasn't until they reached a solid looking door and Dwight dropped his ankles that he started to take notice of what was happening to him.

"Here we are, princess," Dwight grumbled, grabbing him under each armpit and dragging him into a small, windowless room. He let him go and Rick fell flat on his back with a small grunt, his already injured head landing with a solid thud. "Home sweet home."

Rick struggled to sit up and immediately started heaving. He looked around desperately but the room was completely empty. He didn't even have a goddamn toilet.

"You're gonna wanna hold that in," the saviour warned him before slamming the door closed, throwing Rick into complete darkness.

He listened to the sound of the saviours retreating footsteps before he lost his fight with nausea and threw up.

****

Negan decided to leave the pretty sheriff alone for twenty-four hours so he could spend the time in solitude thinking very carefully about the consequences of making stupid fucking decisions. He was expecting a little glaring when he opened the cell door and felt a wave of concern when he saw Rick lying curled up in a corner, still and pale. The rooms stank of vomit and piss and all kinds of unpleasant things.

“Hey, Rick?” Negan boomed, hoping to startle the other man into wakefulness. The Alexandrian didn’t even flinch. “For fuck sake,” he muttered, stepping into the room and checking the man’s pulse. It was there, strong and sure. What the fuck?

He didn’t have time to do more than grunt when a fist connected squarely with his jaw and he was knocked on his ass. Pretty Rick scrambled over him, clearly desperate to reach the door and escape. Negan stumbled upright and managed to snag the back of the sheriff's belt, hauling the slighter man back with a booming curse. Rick fell back, rolling in vomit as he tried to kick at Negan, only barely missing his head.

Not. Fucking. OK.

Negan got his bearings and dragged the smaller man towards him with a sharp tug. Rick fell with a soft curse, practically landing in the saviour's lap. He immediately started thrashing, clearly frantic to get away.

Negan had just about had enough. He punched Rick solidly in the ribs, finally halting the southerners damned thrashing as he gasped desperately for breath. “That was real fucking stupid, Rick,” Negan said, wrapping his arm around the smaller man's and using his free hand to latch onto Rick’s throat. As he suspected, the Alexandrian went still at the threat of a throttling. “What did you think you were gonna do, huh? You’re trapped here you dumb fuck. We have guards, sentries. You wouldn’t have got away.”

Rick didn’t say anything, which was probably for the best. Negan actually thought he might kill the little fuck if he tried to fight him again.

“I don’t care how fucking pretty you are, you keep this shit up and I’m gonna feed you to the walkers.” The man jolted violently but he wasn’t fighting. He was scared, Negan realised. He actually believed the threat. “Have you calmed the fuck down now?” he asked irritably.

Rick breathed deeply for a moment before nodding tightly. “I’m calm.”

“You gonna try and attack me again?”

A small head shake.

“I’m gonna need a verbal response there, sweetheart.”

“No, I’m not going to attack you,” Rick muttered, sounding all kinds of pissed.

“I’m real glad to hear it,” Negan stood up, dragging Rick with him -- his knees protested angrily, fuck, he was getting too old for this shit -- and half carried, half dragged the smaller man back to his room.

Everyone in their path bowed, crumpling to the ground and averting their eyes in the face of Negan’s fucking awesomeness. “You see that,” Negan asked, breathing into the side of Rick’s neck as the Alexandrian stiffened and made a weak attempt to break free. “They understand the goddamn rules. They know when to shut their damned mouth and submit.” He could tell Rick didn’t like that one fucking bit. Well too bad, because Negan was the ruler of his little kingdom and that meant that everyone did whatever he fucking told them to do.

He dropped Rick on his bed as soon as they entered the room, noting the way the other man recoiled and tried to scramble to his feet.

“So help me Rick, if you get off this bed I will beat the ever loving shit out of you,” Rick hesitated and Negan pounced. “So here are your choices, sweetheart,” Negan said, crawling onto the bed on top of the smaller man and getting all up in his grill -- he made sure to leave an inch between their bodies but he could tell Rick was panicking by the way his breath hitched and he went still. “You can stay here with me, in this room. You won’t have to work for me and I promise you’ll be fed and looked after. Alternatively, you can say no you can go back to your little cell. I will leave you in there, in the dark, alone and starving until you eventually crumble and give in, in which case you will come and live with me in this here room regardless. The choice is yours gorgeous.”

Rick looked so goddamn pretty when he was frightened.

Chapter 10: Friends

Rick felt his hands shake with the urge to shove the other man away -- he was exhausted and in pain and he just wanted to sleep -- but the very real possibility that Negan would seriously injure him if he fought back kept him paralysed. He hated the feeling of helplessness and vulnerability.

“I asked you a question, sheriff,” the saviour purred before his tone turned cold and dangerous. “What’s it gonna be?”

Rick didn’t want to go back to the cell. The idea of being confined in a small, windowless room for an endless period of time was terrifying, but there was no way he would -- *that he could* -- ever voluntarily allow the murderer to touch him.

“Go to hell,” he hissed, meeting the saviour's eyes and doing everything possible to project his disgust. Surprise flickered over Negan’s face before a slow, Cheshire grin spread across his wide lips.

“I don’t think you realise what it is you’re choosing here Rick,” Negan whispered, his stubbled jaw ghosting over RIck’s cheek as he ran a hand down the smaller man’s arm and latched onto his wrist. “Maybe you need a little perspective, but fuck if you don’t look like your eyes are about to roll up into the back of your head,” he slapped Rick softly and clicked his fingers in the smaller man's face. “You’re lucky I’m such a goddamn softy, Rick. So, not tonight. Tonight, you’re going to sleep,” he stood up abruptly, tugging Rick after him. When the smaller man stumbled and his legs threatened to buckle Negan wrapped a long arm around his waist and hoisted him upright. “You need a little help there, Bambi?”

Rick wanted to tell the man to go fuck himself but he was smart enough to realise he was already balancing on a razor edge -- he couldn’t afford to piss Negan off any more than he clearly already had. He gritted his teeth and looked away.

“Tomorrow, we’re going to visit a friend of mine,” Negan said, all but carrying him to the lone sofa and helping him sit down with surprising gentleness. Rick’s body was beginning to relax out of sheer exhaustion when Negan suddenly grabbed his legs and forced him onto his back. “None of that,” he boomed when Rick started to squirm. “Tonight - tonight you’re gonna keep your mouth closed and you’re gonna go as you’re told. And what I’m telling you to do is

sleep. Tomorrow, after we visit my friends, you can make your choice."

"You keep talkin' bout choices," Rick said softly, the words unbidden and probably damning. "As if there's a fair comparison between imprisonment and torture and imprisonment and rape."

Negan's expression soured. "You fucking reek, Rick. You know that?"

It was probably true. Rick certainly didn't feel clean. Did the other man expect him to apologise because of it?

"Can I have some water?" he asked instead, curling into himself a little when Negan's grin inexplicably returned.

"Sure fucking thing," the other man said, standing up and approaching a small fridge in the room. He grabbed a bottle of water and dropped in Rick's lap. "You need anything else? The bathroom?"

Rick shook his head as he unscrewed the water bottle and took a deep drink. All he wanted to do was sleep.

"Excellent. Now, I'm gonna inject a little trust in our relationship and I'm not gonna tie you down, Rick. How-fucking-ever, before you get any ideas and try to throttle me in my sleep please know that there are guards posted outside this room at all times. Even if you manage to kill me you won't get out of Sanctuary alive. If you just try sneaking out
I'll break your kneecaps. Comprendo?"

Rick nodded tiredly.

"Use your words, Rick."

"I understand," he rasped, tucking his legs towards his chest and trying to conserve heat. He couldn't seem to stop shaking.

"Fucking-A," the saviour boomed, causing Rick to startle. The other man proceeded to strip until he was in his boxers and climbed onto the bed. He turned on the tv and finally seemed to settle. "Don't go trying to take advantage of me now, Rick," he said, laughing. "I'm not that kind of girl."

Rick stared numbly at the TV screen without really seeing what he was watching. He couldn't help but think of Judith. He knew she would be looked after and the person most likely to take her in would

be Carol. He wondered how Ed would react. The hick wouldn't like it but he'd concede. Rick could only wonder what would happen behind closed doors as his little girl aged. He loved and trusted Carol, but he didn't want her asshole husband anywhere near his little girl.

His thoughts inevitably turned to the town. There would be a panic following Spencer's murder. His parents would be utterly devastated; Deanna left to pull together the tattered remains of her family whilst simultaneously reassuring the town. He felt a pang of gnawing guilt that he couldn't be there to help take some of the load.

"Jesus fuck, Rick," Negan said, his voice surprisingly soft. Rick looked up, startled to find the other man's gaze locked unnervingly on him."I can practically hear you thinking. You wanna turn it down a notch."

It went against his instincts but he couldn't stand the other mans eyes on him, He rolled over on the couch and tried to calm his beating heart. He was OK. He wasn't hurt badly -- at least not yet -- and he had every opportunity to run. He just needed to bide his time. He would be OK. It would be OK.

****

Once Rick finally decided to loosen up enough to relax he fell into a pretty deep sleep. In fact, he didn't wake up despite the fair amount of noise Negan made when he got up and started getting dressed. The Saviour stepped a little closer to the sheriff and wrinkled his nose in distaste. The smell coming off Rick wasn't...pleasant. No suprise, all things considered. Negan took a few minutes contemplating if he wanted him clean before they made their visit. He eventually decided against it. He wanted the other man as off balance as humanly possible before the time came to make his decision.

"Time to get up sleeping beauty," he chimed, grabbing RIck by the back of his shirt and tugging him upright. The Alexandrian instinctively started thrashing, clearly expecting an attack of some kind. Negan grabbed his wrist and fisted his other hand in Rick's filthy curls, shaking him until he grew still. "That's right, sweetheart. Wakey, wakey. It's just me," he cooed as Rick's bright blue eyes finally focused on him. "Jesus, Rick you're not much of a morning person, are you?"

"Let go of me," the other man gasped, tugging sharply and nearly breaking Negan's grip on his wrist.

"I'll let go when I'm damn well ready, sweetcheeks," the larger man

growled, enjoying the sudden wariness in the other man's eyes. "You about settled down?"

A sharp nod.

"Words Rick," Negan cooed, squeezing hard enough to make the southerner wince. "Use your words."

"I'm calm."

"Good boy," Negan cooed, tugging Rick upright. "You need to piss?"

A look of hatred spread over the other man's eyes before he quickly dropped his gaze.

"If you piss yourself cause you refused to use the goddamn toilet RIck I'm gonna be fucked off."

"Yes," the other man hissed.

"Ex-fucking-scuse me?" Negan asked, grinning.

"Yes, I need to use the bathroom."

Negan grinned and pulled the other man to the shitter, shoving him inside and closing the door. "You got five minutes, darlin'."

Rick, bless his soul, was finished in four. His face and hair looked a little damp, his curls falling in his eyes as he waited awkwardly for Negan to acknowledge him.

"Come on then, Pretty Rick. It's time to meet some friends of mine."

Chapter 11: Waiting

Rick didn't know what to expect as he was dragged down a hall not dissimilar to the one he was imprisoned in. He could hear loud, obnoxiously cheerful music booming out all around him, mystifyingly out of place in the stark and clinical surroundings of the Sanctuary.

"Love me that song," Negan said, shouting to be heard over the music. "Just brightens up my fucking morning."

He gestured with the bat and the music abruptly cut off. Rick felt a spike of anxiety when he noticed Dwight was waiting for them beside one of the cell doors. So much for trying to persuade Rick to conform; it looked like he was about to be thrown into a cell after all. He instinctively pulled back and Negan's grip tightened in response.

"The fuck are you going, sweetheart?"

Rick shook his head, unable to find the words to defend himself. He watched helplessly as Dwight opened the cell door and stepped aside. The smell coming from the opening was atrocious and Rick instinctively recoiled, only to have his scruff grabbed before he was dragged inside.

The sheriff was startled to realise the room was already occupied by a filthy and wild looking naked man. He looked up at Rick and Negan through long, matted strands of hair, his gaze jerking nervously between them before his eyes eventually landed on Negan's bat.

"You and Daryl here share some similarities," the Saviour said, letting go of Rick's neck and wrapping an arm around his waist. "Daryl here is stubborn too. Ain't that right Daryl?"

"Did you try to rape him too?" Rick asked, staring owlishly at the naked man. Beneath the dirt and grime, RIck could definitely make out bruises. What were they doing to him?

"Nah; Daryl here is a prime A-grade soldier. He ain't soft like you, sweetheart."

Daryl's flickered over Rick before landing on Negan. "Where's my brother?"

"You know the rules, Daryl. You wanna see your brother, you gotta

agree to the rules. You remember the rules right?"

"I remember," he said, his voice more of a growled rasp than actual words. "Answers still no."

Negan's expression hardened to something frankly terrifying and Rick was certain he had been brought to the cell just to watch Negan cave Daryl's skull in. He opened his mouth to protest when Negan's face morphed into his usual Cheshire smile and the tension seemed to drain out of his shoulders. "You're one fucking stubborn son of a bitch, Daryl. I do not know where you get your stamina. Dwight," he shouted and a moment later the scarred man appeared in the doorway. "Do you know where Daryl here gets his stamina?"

"From a nutritious diet of dog food and bread," Dwight answered with a sneer.

"That's right," Negan replied, nodding his head with a wide smile. "Because Daryl here likes to act like an animal. He likes to growl and bite and lash out, and if Daryl wants to act like an animal I'm gonna damn well treat him like one."

Daryl's eyes flickered back to the saviour before dropping to the floor. He curled into himself, twitching, jittery and clearly distressed. It was, frankly, heartbreaking to watch.

"How long have you been in here?" Rick asked, trying to keep his voice soft and soothing. He nearly jumped out of his skin when Negan brought the bat down on the wall beside him, causing the plaster to crack in a cloud of dust.

"You do not talk to him. Not ever."

"OK," Rick gasped, his eyes fixed on the bat. He couldn't help but think of Andrea and Spencer. He really didn't want to be bludgeoned to death, but then he guessed that was the point. Negan used the bat as an extension of himself -- it was meant to instill fear and obedience -- it was Negan's way of controlling his followers and those that fought against him. . .

"Good. You wanna ask something, you direct your questions to me. You got something to ask me, Rick?"

He nodded slowly, turning to meet Negan's eyes and trying not to let his distaste show too clearly. "How long have you kept him here?"

“Three months, give or take. As I said, he’s a stubborn son of a bitch.”

Rick couldn’t imagine being locked away in the cell for three months with nothing but the sound of that terrible music playing in his ears. It was torture, plain and simple. Negan was utterly remiss in the way he treated other human beings. If he wanted something, he took it and if what he took was a person, and that person resisted, they were hurt until they conformed.

“And if I decline your invitation, I end up like him?” Rick asked, unable to look away from the Saviours intense smile.

“I got all the time in the world, sweetheart,” Negan’s arm tightened around Rick’s waist, the possessive gesture telling him everything he needed to know about Negan’s intentions.

He wouldn’t downright rape him, but he would strip Rick of everything that made him who he was. He could and would destroy Rick to get his way.

“So what’s your answer, sweetheart?”

It was inevitable; everything Negan was showing him offered a blinding insight into what his future could be. He didn’t want that -- he couldn’t allow his entire being be stripped away so Negan could get his way and, inevitably grow bored with whatever was left of Rick when he was done with him.

“No,” he said, his voice barely more than a rasp. “My answer’s no.”

Negan pressed his forehead against the side of Rick’s head and sighed deeply. “That’s too bad,” he said, loosening his hold enough to step back and put some space between them. “I had everything planned out -- the town, your little girl -- everything was gonna be taken care of. But now...well things are different now Rick. You’ve gone and pissed me off. I offer to take care of you and to treat your right, and you reject me. I do not take kindly to that shit.”

“Don’t -” Rick’s voice cracked and he instinctively stumbled forward. “Don’t hurt my little girl.”

Negan stared at him, his expression turning thoughtful. “I really, really don’t want to Rick, but you gotta meet me halfway here.”

Rick looked back at Daryl, covered in filth and clearly traumatised. The other man met his eyes before resolutely turning away. No help

there.

“Still need a little time to think about it huh?” Negan asked, sounding thoughtful. “No worries,” he shoved Rick forward so hard that he hit the opposite wall and practically collapsed on Daryl. “Take your time,” he said, before slamming the door closed.

A few seconds later the music started to play.

Chapter 12: Persuasion

Chapter Notes

A small chapter as I get back into the swing of things :)

“Get off me,” Daryl snarled, pushing rick away with a vicious shove that sent him sprawling. “Touch me again and I’ll break your goddamn neck.”

Rick inched backwards, unable to retreat far within the tight confined of the cell. His back slammed up against the opposite wall and he held up his hands defensively. “I’m sorry. I won’t come any closer. I’m staying right here, right where I am.”

Daryl’s stared at him through streaks of filthy blonde/brown hair, his body tense and his eyes crazed. Rick reminded himself that the other man had been locked up for a long time, surely too long to have remained completely sane. “Who are you?”

“My names Rick,” he said, trying to keep his tone soothing and non-threatening. “I’m not with them, I’m not with Negan, I swear.”

Daryl shook his head, his shoulders sagging as he curled into himself. “He sent you to trick me. He’s trying to fuck with my head.”

“No, I’m not - I -” he flinched back when Daryl pounced, grappling with the other man in a desperate attempt to push him away. Daryl was still strong despite his stint in captivity, stronger than Rick who was still reeling from his encounters with Negan and Dwight. As soon as Daryl had Rick on his back he grabbed him by the throat and pressed down with enough force to cut off Rick’s air.

“Stop,” he gasped, clawing at the other man's hands. Was this what Negan had planned? Did he want Rick to die?

“You tell me truthfully,” Daryl hissed, his hot breath washing over Rick’s face. “Who the fuck are you?”

“S-stop,” Rick gasped. “Can’t...breathe…”

The other man backed on minutely, enough to allow Rick to suck in some much needed air.

“Talk!”

“He came to my settlement, took over everything. Killed people.”

Daryl continued to stare down at him, the crazed look in his eyes intensifying. “Why are you here?”

Rick felt mortified, averting his gaze. “Because he took me.”

It took a couple of seconds for the implications of what he was saying to sink in. Daryl recoiled, releasing Rick and returning to his corner of the cell. “He took me too. You asked him before if he - if he...”

Rick looked away.

“Fuck man, I…” Daryl broke off, averting his gaze. “Bastard don’t come close.”

“No,” Richard agreed, sitting up and rubbing his neck.”Not even close…”

“Assholes got my brother,” Daryl said softly. “Using us to control the other one. Merle gave in a while back.”

“Gave in how?”

“He’s working for him. Serving him or whatever.”

“He’s a saviour?”

Daryl shrugged a dirty, naked shoulder. “Made to do it, but yeah.”

“He’s threatening my town. He know’s where my little girl is.”

“How old?”

“Just turned three.”

Daryl grunted, clearly unhappy.

They both fell silent, the prevalent sound of music drowning out his thoughts. “When do they switch it off?”

“This music? They don’t.”

Jesus.

“Why haven’t you given up?” he asked, genuinely intrigued. “How can you stand it in here?”

“I got my reasons,” the other man growled. “What about you?”

Rick huffed an unhappy breath and turned away. He honestly didn’t know what he was going to do. The thought of Spenser’s broken body was still foremost in his mind. He couldn’t imagine what Deanna must be feeling; he couldn’t bear the idea of losing anyone else, least of all his little girL.

“I can’t risk my people,” he said softly. “And he knows that.”

“You give him an inch, he’ll take over your fucking life man. I know the bastard, he’s a complete wack job.”

“Yeah,” Rick said softly, wrapping his arms around his waist and hugging himself for warmth. “I noticed.”

Chapter 13: Relax

Despite the noise, the stress and the tension, Rick actually managed to nod off. He woke sometime later with a head was full of static and a rolling, nauseous feeling in his stomach. At least the terrible music had finally stopped, he thought sluggishly. He tried to sit up but his entire body was one big ache. It took him a moment to realise someone was shaking him. He looked up blearily and flinched back when he realised Negan was kneeling over him, his large hand enveloping Rick's shoulder.

"Rise and fuckin' shine, sweetheart."

He sat up cautiously, momentarily locking eyes with Daryl who was watching them silently from his corner of the cell. The other man looked nervous and jittery, his gaze inevitably settling on the floor near his feet.

Negan reached out suddenly and grabbed Rick's jaw in a bruising hold. He forced his head up, the sudden movement almost making him gag. "Jesus Christ, sweetheart," Negan boomed, his face breaking into a mocking grin. "You look like shit warmed up," his gaze moved past Rick. "The fuck you do to him, Daryl?"

Daryl didn't answer, shaking his head and cringing away.

"He didn't do anything," Rick choked out, terrified but very certain he didn't want Daryl to be punished for something he didn't do.

"Yeah, you two make friends then?"

When Rick didn't answer Negan grabbed his filthy shirt and dragged him to his feet. The taller man leaned into him and pressed his lips against Rick's ear. "It's a new day and I am done fucking around, Rick. You wanna make sure your little girl — that your people — are taken care of, you come with me willingly. You don't agree, you can stay here for a week and we do this all again. In the meanwhile, we're due for a pickup," he leaned into Rick, pressing him flat against the wall. "So, what's your answer, sweetheart?"

****

Pretty Rick's eyes were glazed, his breathing fast and erratic. He shook his head, mumbling incoherently as he tried to flinch away.

“I asked you a goddamn question!” he shouted.

Rick recoiled. “I - yes,” the smaller man whispered, shaking his head as he spoke. “Yes.”

“You wanna say that again, baby? Maybe lout enough for the whole class to hear.”

Rick shook his head, but when he next spoke his voice was even. He looked up and those gorgeous baby blues locked on Negan with admirable spirit. “I said yes.”

“Woohee, you hear that Daryl? Pretty fucking Rick said yes,” he grabbed the man by the waist and dragged him out of the cell, turning on Daryl and sticking the bat in his face. Daryl’s flinch was barely noticeable, but it was there. “Rick here has some common sense, Daryl. He’s saving himself a whole world of hurt. You should follow his goddamn example.”

Rick was trembling very slightly, clearly at the end of his endurance. He was smart enough not to struggle or protest as Negan threatened the other man, but it was clear by the tension in his stance that he was growing increasingly nervous. Negan decided to show him some mercy, after all, he’d submitted nicely and deserved a little gentle handling.

“I’ll catch you later Daryl,” he said, lowering the bat and stepping back, taking Rick with him. He looked down at the smaller man, enjoying the way he fit so prettily against his side. “How about you and I go back to my room and we get you cleaned up?” he didn’t wait for a response, practically carrying Rick through the sanctuary and back to his quarters. “You have a little trouble staying up straight sweetheart?” he asked good-naturedly as Rick struggled to keep pace.

He took his time walking back, acknowledging everyone he passed and even stopping to talk to a few people. Rick squirmed the entire time, clearly uncomfortable and more than a little unsteady. Negan ran into one of his wives when the little sheriff's legs finally buckled and he collapsed.

Sherry’s eyes widened very slightly but she knew better than to go to the other man's aid. “New friend of yours?”

“You could call it that,” Negan agreed, grabbing Rick by the middle and throwing him over his shoulder. The southerner grunted, moaning softly before falling silent. “What’s the matter darlin’, you jealous?”

Her gaze narrowed and the hate she felt for Negan was painfully clear. He'd always liked that about Sherry, she submitted prettily enough but she wasn't subservient. "Did he say yes?"

"Of course he did. You know I don't take people unwillingly."

Her eyes said everything she wouldn't dare voice out loud. "When you're... finished let one of the girls know and I'll collect him for you."

"That's mighty generous of you," Negan said, standing over her and admiring the way she stood her ground. "I'll be sure to give you a hollar when we're done."

She gave him a hard look but ultimately backed off, verbally if not physically.

By the time he reached his room and settled Rick on the bed the other man was out cold. Negan slapped his cheek a few times, trying to rouse him. When he didn't get a response he went to the shower and turned down the heat. He stripped Rick out of his soiled clothing, taking a minute to admire the view before he picked him up bridal style and dropped him gently in the tub. The minute the cold water hit him Rick sat up, sputtering and clearly bewildered. He looked up and flinched when he realised he was naked and Negan was standing over him.

He looked like a half-drowned kitten, his curly hair plastered to his face as he visibly started shaking.

"You awake now darlin'?" he asked, enjoying the way Rick continued to watch him warily. "Those beautiful baby blues of yours are just breaking my heart," he reached over the sheriff and turned up the heat, noticing the way the smaller man flattened himself against the tub. "Give it a second and that'll start to feel real nice."

Despite the heat, Rick continued to shiver and remained curled in a ball at the bottom of the tub. Negan waited, wondering what the other man would do. When it became clear he had no intention of moving Negan sighed and started to strip.

"What are you doing?" Rick asked, instantly on edge.

"I'm taking off my clothes sweetheart."

"Why?" the other man burst out, straining to get up.

“Because I don’t want my clothes to get wet,” Negan said, stepping out of his trousers and walking into the shower. Rick immediately wedged himself as far from Negan as he could go, his breathing becoming noticeably erratic. “Jesus fuck sweetheart, you’re gonna give yourself a goddamn aneurysm if you keep this shit up. Come ‘ere,” he lent down and grabbed Rick under his armpits, hoisting him up and propping him against the wall. “Think you can keep upright?”

Rick nodded his head frantically, his eyes looking everywhere but at Negan as he used the tiles to help keep his feet. Negan left him for a second, grabbing the soap before grabbing Rick by the waist and spinning him around so his back was pressed against Negan’s chest. The other man flinched violently but didn’t try to escape.

Negan decided to take some pity on Rick and reward his good behaviour with “OK darlin’,” he said soothingly. “Just calm down. All we’re doing is getting clean. Nothing else is gonna happen right now.”

Rick didn’t respond, latching onto the arm around his waist and bowing his head against the spray.

“That’s it, sweetheart,” Negan said, lathering up Rick’s curls one-handed. “Just relax into it and everything’ll be alright.”

Chapter 14: Homecoming

Rick didn't resist when Negan pulled him out of the tub, his whole body shaking with fatigue and pain. He allowed the man to wrap a towel around his waist and guide him onto the bed, urging him onto his back before stepping into the kitchenette. He rooted around for a few minutes, running the tap and closing cupboards. When he reappeared next to the bed he placed a glass of water and two little pills on the bedside table.

"You're gonna want those," Negan said brightly, helping Rick to sit upright.

"What are they?"

"Just painkillers. Bottoms up."

Rick took the tablets, knowing it was beyond stupid but too exhausted to care. He finished off the water and waited for whatever the man had planned. He knew he should feel fear but the truth was that he was numb. He had agreed to Negan's terms and now all he had to do was let things run their course. Maybe when the man finally had his fill he would lose interest. Stranger things had happened.

Negan took his jaw in his hands and hummed thoughtfully. "You made the right decision. I look after what's mine, Rick. Your little girl's gonna be treated like a goddamn queen because of you."

He didn't bother telling the other man that he was fully capable of looking after his own child. That he had been looking after her and his boy ever since the world collapsed. He was positive at least one of them was still alive.

"You know what Rick, I am just so fucking curious to know what you and Daryl talked about whilst you were locked up. Me, I can barely get a goddamn word out of him."

"He didn't say much," Rick said, which was true enough. "He mostly talked about his brother."

"Merle? Heh, now there's a solider. I gotta be honest, I was so sure Daryl would fall into line when his big brother joined the ranks. Go figure."

Go figure, Rick silently agreed.

He startled when he felt hot breath against his jaw. Seconds later Negan kissed him, pressing feather-soft touches against his skin before ghosting down his neck and locking onto his throat. Rick jolted but didn't try to push him away. He had agreed to it and now it was time to follow through. *He was doing it for his little girl, for his family.*

Except, he'd never been with a man. Hell, he'd only ever been with Lori. To say he was inexperienced was a gaping understatement. Goddamnit, he was afraid.

Negan pushed him back and Rick let him. The other man climbed over him, distributing his weight on his elbows but effectively cadging him in. Rick didn't like it, but he seriously doubted his discomfort mattered.

"You're so fucking pretty," Negan muttered, pressing his lips against Rick's and coaxing his mouth open with his tongue. He took it pretty slowly for a few minutes and Rick felt himself relaxing a little. He wasn't enjoying it but it wasn't repulsive.

And then, of course, Negan reached for the towel.

"W-wait a second," he said, gripping Negan's wrist and forcing himself to meet the saviour's eyes. "Just wait."

"I thought I made it pretty fucking clear I'm done waiting. We either do this now or you go back to the cell with your new buddy."

"I know," Rick said, but he didn't let go. "I just…"

"You just what?" Negan asked, his expression darkening.

"I'm not trying to piss you off," Rick said, which was the truth. "We're just moving a little fast."

"You shitting me Rick? We are moving at a fucking glacial pace here. I refuse to suffer from any more blue balls cause you can't grow a pair and commit."

They stared at one another and RIck slowly, reluctantly, let his hands drop. Negan pulled the towel off him, drew back to look him and promptly flipped him onto his stomach. The implications of the position he found himself in were painfully clear and it took everything in Rick not to start swinging.

“That fucking ass,” Negan hissed seconds before he brought his palm down, *hard*, on RIck’s backside. “This ass and that face, you’re a fucking find RIck. You know that?”

Rick could feel his face burning. For the first time since he was brought in, he felt his anger overwhelm his fear. “I’m going to kill you,” he hissed, so quietly he wasn’t sure Negan heard him.

“That a fact?” the other man asked, palming Rick’s ass hard enough to make him wince. “And how are you gonna do that, little sheriff?”

Rick shook his head furiously. He felt something cold and wet press against his hole, circling but not pushing in. He tensed, knew he was making it worse for himself but unable to relax.

“You lost your voice all of a sudden?” the Saviour asked, taunting him. “You were just talking about killing me.”

Rick felt the finger catch as his rim before it pushed in. he grunted, squirming uncomfortably. It hurt, which just made him tense up more. It felt weird too. He'd never touched himself there before and hated that he didn't know what to expect.

“You’re fucking tight baby. You’re gonna feel so good wrapped around my cock. God, I can’t wait to fuck you. I’ve been waiting to get in you for months.”

“Go to hell,” Rick snarled.

He felt a hand wrap around the back of his neck, pushing his face into the pillows. Head down and ass up -- he could barely breathe.

He was so busy panicking that he barely heard the knock on the door. He felt Negan tense behind him and then the man snarled and, thank god, pulled away. He wrapped the dropped towel around his waist and threw the bedsheet over Rick. “This has better be fucking good,” he hollered.

Rick didn’t bother moving from his sprawl on the bed. It’s not like he wanted anyone to see him.

“I’m sorry Negan," it was Simon, he was sure of it. "But it’s the kid. He’s back.”

Negan burst into laughter. “Holy fucking shit, he sure got here quicker than I was expecting. Seems like I got something he might want.”

“He’s brought people with him, lots of them. He’s demanding to see you.”

“And who the fuck am I to deny him. Assemble the men. Give me five minutes to change," the door closed and Negan started moving around. “Looks like you got yourself a short reprieve after all sweetheart,” he pulled the quilt back and was fully clothed. “Stay lose for me. I’ll be back to see you later.”

Rick watched him leave before forcing himself up. He went through Negan’s draws, eventually pulling out a too big t-shirt and a pair of boxers. He went back to the bed and, despite his resolve not to let down his defences, he promptly passed out.

Chapter 15: Visit

“Where the hell is he?” the little psycho demanded, his single blue eye glaring fucking daggers at Negan. “I know you took him. Where is he?”

“You’re gonna have to be a little more specific,” Negan said as he stepped down the staircase leading into the main compound. The boy was surrounded by Negan’s people, but despite how badly he was outnumbered the little badass looked ready to start swinging. “I take a lot of people.”

“Give him back,” he shouted, pulling out a gun and pointing it at Negan’s head. “Now.”

Negan looked over at Simon. “Really?”

His second had the good manners to look chagrined. “Sorry boss. We checked him over, I swear.”

“Jesus kid, where the fuck were you hiding that thing,” he boomed, grinning wide. “So, you gonna do anything with that?”

“I’m gonna blow your head off if you don’t bring out my dad, right now.”

Negan watched him, considering. “OK,” he said at last. “You heard the man Simon, go fetch his daddy.”

****

Rick startled from his sleep, bewildered and confused as he was dragged to his feet. He staggered, instinctively planting his feet as he was strong-armed through the bedroom door and out into the corridor.

He was so disorientated that it took him a moment to realise it was Simon, not Negan manhandling him. “What the hell are you doing?” he demanded, struggling to keep up with the other man’s longer stride.

“Negan wants you. Move your ass.”

Rick was barely dressed, he was sick and hurt and painfully confused. He tried to drag his wrist free, pulling violently. “Get off me.”

Simon slogged him in the stomach. Rick doubled over, wheezing as he tried to drag in enough air not to suffocate. He grunted as his head was drawn back and he was thrown against the wall of the corridor. Simon loomed in his space, his hand latching onto Rick's throat. "We really don't have time for this. When I tell you to move, you move. Understand?"

Rick nodded woodenly, too disorientated and hurt to fight. He gasped as he was dragged away from the wall and pulled into a high stairwell. He staggered after Simon, regularly tripping over his own feet as wave after wave of dizziness threatened to knock him on his ass.

"Slow down," he said seconds before his legs buckled. He hit the concrete steps with a pained grown, wishing to god he had the strength to throw the bastard off the stairwell.

"For fuck sake," Simon snarled as he reached down and dragged Rick back to his feet. "You hurt?"

"What the hell do you care?" Rick snarled back at him, trying not to sway as his vision doubled and blurred.

"I care because Negan cares," the big man said, his small eyes hard and devoid of sympathy. "You gonna fall over again?"

Rick honestly wasn't sure. "Can you go a little slower?"

"For fuck sake," the bigger man grumbled, taking a firm but steadying grip on Rick's bicep. "OK, we'll go slower. Not like everyone's waiting for you or anything."

"Waiting for me?" Rick asked as they took the stairs at a much slower pace. "What are you talking about?"

"You've got a visitor, Rick," he said, smirking as they reached the bottom of the stairs and held the door open for Rick. "Seems like everyone wants a piece."

"Who?" Rick asked, utterly mystified. Who would be stupid enough to come to the sanctuary for him - how could they be so reckless?

"See for yourself," Simon said, dragging him out onto a balcony where Negan was stood waiting for him.

"Here he is," the saviour leader boomed, grabbing Rick by the back of

his shirt and dragging him stumbling in front of him. One arm wrapped around his waist and the other fisted in his hair, dragging his head back. “Careful now junior, you shoot me and you might hit daddy.”

Wait, what?

“Get the fuck off him,” Carl hissed, his voice achingly familiar despite the uncharacteristic tone of fury. “I swear to god, Negan I’ll kill you if you hurt him.”

“I’ve already hurt him,” Negan mocked, pressing his lips against the side of Rick’s throat. “But only a little. Wouldn’t want to damage something this pretty, now would I? Not that you’d know anything about that.”

“Carl?” Rick gasped, squirming against Negan’s hold. He still couldn’t see straight but he tried to focus on the blurry figure of his son. *Did he hit his head?* He couldn’t remember. “No, no you can’t be here. You can’t -”

Negan slapped a hand over his mouth, effectively gagging him. “Shush sweetheart, the badasses are talking.”

His son was in the sanctuary. *His boy was in danger, he had been captured by Negan and was surrounded by murders and rapists. Oh god, what if Negan put Carl in the cells, what if he tried to make him one of his soldiers.*

He could hear talking taking place around him but he couldn’t seem to focus on what was being said. He felt panic rising up. He needed to get Carl out of the sanctuary. He needed to save his boy.

“Calm down sweetheart,” Negan whispered softly against his ear. “You carry on like this and you’re gonna have a goddamn heart attack.”

Rick clumsily grabbed Negan’s wrist and tugged weakly. *He had to get to Carl - he had to...*

“Looks like daddy here isn’t feeling too good, kid. How about you put the gun down and we all have a nice chat, all fucking civil like?”

Rick jerked, the movement causing his legs to buckle. Negan stopped him from falling, but Carl cried out anyway.

“What the hell did you do to him?” he screamed, seconds before RIck’s eyes rolled into the back of his head and he passed out.

Chapter 16: Perspective

“Get the fuck off him,” Carl demanded, forcing down his shock and trying very hard not to shoot the manipulative, hateful bastard in the face. Rick looked wrecked; he was pale and sweaty, littered in bruises and unable to focus or even stay upright. “I swear to god, Negan I’ll kill you if you hurt him.”

“I’ve already hurt him,” Negan challenged, his eyes glittering with mirth as he kissed the side of Rick’s neck. A thousand thoughts raced through Carl’s mind, all of them leading to the conclusion that the Saviour had raped his dad. Negan’s expression shifted, turning harder when he saw the realisation dawn on Carl’s face. “But only a little. Wouldn’t want to damage something this pretty, now would I? Not that you’d know anything about that.”

Carl sneered, resisting the urge to cover his wrecked eye. He’d be damned if he’d be made to feel ashamed because of something as insignificant as his looks. He was a warrior, a man of action and violence. Being pretty would just get him killed quicker.

“Carl?” Rick gasped, too disorientated to even focus. He was struggling weakly but he might as well have been a kitten for all the good it did him. “No, no you can’t be here. You can’t -”

Negan looked down at Rick contemplatively before pressing his hand over the smaller man's mouth. “Shush sweetheart,” he said, grinning at Carl. “The badasses are talking.”

Rick clawed at Negan’s grasp, crying out against his hold. Carl couldn’t make out what he was saying but he caught his name a few times. Rick looked so small next to Negan -- he’d always been on the shorter side but he was so well respected in their community that he’d never appeared dwarfed, even by men that stood a head taller than him. Carl had never thought of him as small until that moment. He hated it.

“He’s sick,” Carl said, taking a single step forward. “He needs a Doctor.”

“I think you’ll find your daddies more resilient than you think he is,” Negan said, winking salaciously. He whispered something at Rick, his lips brushing against his dad’s curls.

Rick reacted by grabbing Negan's wrist; tugging desperately. He was clearly begging, pleading for Carl's safety. It made something lurch in Carl's stomach and at that moment he hated his dad for putting them all in so much danger.

"Looks like daddy here isn't feeling too good, kid," the Saviour noted, having the gall to actually look concerned. "How about you put the gun down and we all have a nice chat, all fucking civil like?"

Rick's legs abruptly buckled, despite the tight hold Negan had around his waist. The bigger man steadied them both, a deep frown appearing on his face.

Carl fucking lost it. "What the hell did you do to him?" he screamed, feeling his anxiety spike when Rick's eyes rolled into the bag of his head and he passed out. Carl couldn't see any obvious wounds, but his dad could be mortally wounded. He could be dying right in front of him.

"Give him to me," he snarled, gesturing threateningly with the gun. "Give him to me now, or swear to fuck I will blow your goddamn head off."

"Kid, you ain't doing shit," Negan said, the amused look nowhere to be seen as he hoisted Rick more firmly in his arms. "Now put down the gun, otherwise my men will take you down. Ain't like I got daddy here to see it now, is it?"

"We're supposed to be helping one another, we're meant be damned allies," Carl snarled, not moving an inch despite the realisation that he couldn't win. He knew that going in of course, but he couldn't just standby as his dad was destroyed. He still couldn't. "If our alliance means anything to you, you'll give him to me."

"Sorry kid, I'd love to help you out. Hell, I can see how much this whole thing is fucking you up inside, but your daddy here is fair game. He ain't one of your people, not anymore. Not after you left Alexandria and set out on your own. Those people, they belong to me now."

"What can I give you?" Carl asked, almost begging. "Name it. I'll do anything."

"Ain't nothing you got that I want," Negan said truthfully. "Now put down the goddamn fucking gun so we can talk this out."

What choice did he have? If he managed to kill Negan without hitting his dad, he'd end up killed and his dad would still be at the mercy of the saviours. There was no way his people could win, not yet anyway.

He dropped the gun.

"Good call, junior," Negan hoisted Rick over his shoulder and leered at the watching crowd. "Simon, make Carl's people feel welcome. He and I are going to have a chat."

He beckoned Carl forward and without any other choice, he followed the saviour through the familiar hallway leading to his personal chambers. He watched Negan drop Rick on the double bed, resisting the urge to instantly go his aid when the saviour gestured to one of the armchairs. "Take a seat," he said, his tone heavily implying it wasn't a suggestion.

Carl sat down warily, keeping a close eye on Negan as he poured them both a glass of whiskey and handed him a tumbler.

"So," he said, grinning that Cheshire smile of his. "If this ain't as awkward as fuck, I don't know what it."

Chapter 17: Hurt

The kids drink remained untouched as he hovered protectively over his old man. “He could have a concussion,” he said, his single-eyed gaze locked firmly on the pretty sheriff. “He’s not responding. *What did you do?*”

Negan let out an exaggerated sigh and moved over to the bed. The kid wasn’t lying, Rick really was unnaturally still. “Hey sweetheart,” he said, turning the pretty sheriff on his back and patting him gently on the cheek. “Wakey-wakey.”

No response. Negan checked his wrist, relieved when he found a steady pulse. He frowned down at the younger man, pushing back his hair with a thoughtful hum. “Don’t move,” he said to the kid, getting up and opening his door. Dwight was loitering outside, his ugly ass gaze locking intently on Negan. “Go get the doctor, quick-like.”

The scarred man nodded, moving swiftly to do Negan’s bidding. He closed the door behind him and turned back to the kid. Carl was gently patting his dad on the face, clearly anxious.

Negan observed them for a moment, taking them in with a thoughtful hum. “I’m not seeing the family resemblance,” he finally observed, letting his gaze wander over the two men with a smirk. “You got your daddy's stink eye alright, but everything else has gotta be your momma.”

“Don’t talk about my mom,” the kid muttered, the response clearly automatic.

Somebody has mommy issues.

“She and your daddy were married, huh?” The psycho’s single eye locked hatefully on Negan. He could almost feel the kids desire to bash his brains in. “Got something to say to me junior?”

The boy wisely pursed his lips and turned back to his dad. “He’s a good man,” he said eventually, voice soft. “He isn’t like us.”

“You mean he’s weak,” Negan said, helping himself to a second glass of whiskey and taking a seat opposite the pair. He allowed his legs to spray open, smirking at Carl’s open revulsion. “Men like your daddy are only good for one thing in the new world. You know as well as I

do what that is, even if you don't want to admit it."

"He isn't weak," the little psycho insisted. "He's brave and strong. Just because he isn't a domineering prick doesn't mean he deserved to...to be -"

"Carl?" the sheriff suddenly gasped, gripping the kid's shoulder as he levered himself upright. He swayed woozily, ghosting his hand over the boy's face. "Are-are you OK?"

The kid's single eye flickered to Negan before settling on his old man. He gently gripped the sheriff's wrists and pulled his hands down to his lap. "Yeah Dad, I'm OK. How are you feeling?"

"Fine, I'm fine," he said, his words a little slurred. "I -"

"Hot damn am I ever glad to see you're awake sweetheart," Negan boomed, smirking when the pretty sheriff nearly jumped out of his skin and flinched back. His bright blue eyes locked hazily on Negan before his arm wrapped around the kid's waist and he hauled him backwards.

"Jesus dad," the psycho hissed, gently pushing his old man into the mattress. "Just...calm down. He's not going to hurt us. I promise."

Negan gwaffed loudly. He leaned forward, enjoying the way the kid puffed himself up, clearly trying to block his dad from Negan's line of sight. "Careful there kid, your mouth might be writing checks your ass can't cash."

The boy's mouth opened, clearly prepared to say something scathing when there was a soft knock on the bedroom door.

"Come in," Negan bellowed, enjoying the way it made what little he could see of the sheriff visibly jump. There was something gratifying in the knowledge that the other man was so responsive to the sound of his voice.

The doctor stepped cautiously into the room, breaking Negan's concentration. He bowed respectfully and waited for further instruction.

"Check on daddy over there would ya Doc. He fainted a little while back. Was out for about fifteen minutes."

"Is he hurt?"

“Guessing he has a concussion, a few cuts and bruises,” he looked over at the kid, grinning wide. “I may have needed to smack him around. Just a little, you understand.”

The kid stood up but his Daddy grabbed his wrist and yanked him back down before he could do something stupid like mouth off. The doctor was nothing if perspective, reading the room and the rising aggression.

“May I?” he asked the kid, gesturing to his old man.

Carl hesitated before nodded sharply and moving back to give the Doctor room.

“Has he thrown up?”

The kid was clearly trying to hide his unease. “He isn’t…acting normal. He’d disorientated.”

“He’s your dad?”

A sharp nod.

“What’s his name?”

The kid shot a cautious look at Negan. “Rick.”

“Hey,” the doc said softly, crouching down until he and the sheriff were on the same level. “You doing OK Rick?” he waited until the Alexandrian nodded cautiously. “I’m Doctor Phillips. I understand you passed out a little while ago. I’m gonna check you out and see if we can fix you up. First off I'm going to use my light here and check your pupils,” so saying he brushed the sheriff's hair back and took a small torch out of his pocket, lifting it to Rick’s eyes. “You ready?”

Another sharp nod.

The Doctor flashed the light in RIck’s pretty eyes before he made some notes, humming thoughtfully. “Does anything hurt Rick?”

The sheriff shot a quick, hazy look at Negan before turning back to the doctor. He bit his lip, clearly hesitant.

“Go ahead Rick,” Negan said brightly. “Tell the doctor what hurts.”

“Isn’t it obvious,” Carl snarled, glaring fucking daggers at the older man. “He and his men beat the shit out of him.”

“Hush,” Rick hissed, sounding like he was barely keeping his shit together. “I’m fine.”

“You were unconscious for fifteen fucking minutes dad. You’re not OK!”

“Ah geez,” Negan grumbled, getting up and approaching the pair. Carl jumped up, clearly prepared to defend his dad when Negan took out his gun and pointed it at the kids head. “You go over there,” he snarled, pointing to the small kitchen table. “And you,” he said, turning back to Rick who was clearly preparing to get up. “Stay the fuck down and tell the doc what hurts, otherwise I’ll have you stripped and he can see for him goddamn self.”

“I’m going to fucking kill you,” Carl growled, but despite his words, he went ahead and did as Negan demanded.

“Sure you are kid,” he said, grinning wide. “So go ahead, Rick. Tell the doctor what hurts.”

Rick was staring intently at the gun in Negan’s hand. The Saviour would have loved to know what was going on inside that pretty nogan of his.

“My head hurts,” Rick growled out, clearly reluctant but unwilling to push Negan. “I think my ribs are bruised.”

The doc inspected the sheriff's ribs and head. He sat back, making more notes in his little pad. “Well, you’ve definitely got a concussion,” he concluded, frowning thoughtfully. “It looks like you’ve been beaten pretty badly. I can’t say for certain without taking an x-ray, but I’d say your ribs are probably cracked. I’m going to wrap them and give you some Tylenol,” he turned to Negan, his eyes hardening. “He needs bed rest. If you don’t want him to worsen you need to...take it easy. Avoid his head.”

“Sure thing doc,” Negan boomed, deciding to take it easy of their one and only physician. “You know best after all.”

“I’m going to go and get the bandages and medication,” he stood up but paused, clearly waiting to be dismissed.

“Yeah, you do that,” Negan said, watching him leave before turning back to the kid. “You calmed down yet?”

“Fuck you!” the kid snarled.

Rick groaned softly.

Negan sauntered over to the sheriff and sat down on the bed next to him. He let his hand rest on the Alexandrian's knee and grinned at the anger he could see on the kids face. “You maybe want to rethink how you speak to me?”

“Get your hands off him,” Carl snarled, standing up. “Get the hell away from him.”

Negan tsked softly, stood up and aimed the gun in the kids face. “I gotta be honest Carl, you’re starting to piss me off.”

Chapter 18: Monster

Rick's brain felt like it was trying to beat its way out of his skill. He groaned softly and rolled onto his side, grunting at the flaring pain in his ribs.

"Take it easy dad." Gentle fingers ran through his hair, pressing a cool damp cloth against his forehead. "Everythings gonna be OK."

"Carl?" he whispered, opening his eyes as he struggled to focus on the blurry outline of his boy. He reached up a shaking hand, cupping Carl's cheek. "Are you OK?"

"Am I OK?" Carl released a broken burst of laughter. "Jesus dad, how can you ask me that? You're the one that…" he broke off, his voice ragged and lost. "What did he do to you?"

"Shhhh," Rick tried to soothe. "It's OK. We're OK."

"Can you move over?" Carl asked, and for a moment he sounded like Rick's little boy again, small and scared and desperate for comfort.

Rick shuffled backwards wordlessly, suppressing a hiss of pain as the mattress dipped under Carl's not insignificant weight. "Where's Negan?" he asked after the boy settled next to him. Rick turned onto his side, pressing his face into his boy's shoulder and taking some comfort from his nearness.

"I don't know. After the doctor looked you over he locked us inside and left," Carl scoffed softly. "It's a fucking insult."

Bizarrely he had to suppress the urge to scold Carl for cursing. He pushed down the urge and raised his head so he could eye the door. "How long?"

"A few hours, I think. They took my watch."

Rick sighed tiredly and pressed his face back into the pillow. He couldn't help but notice that it smelled like Negan. He pushed down his disgust and concentrated on Carl's warm presence. "'I've missed you Carl," he said, relieved that his boy was OK. He didn't realise how much of a toll not knowing had taken on him. "I'm so…I'm glad you're OK."

"Doing better than you," Carl said, laughing bitterly without humour.

“Fucking hell dad, I leave you alone for a couple of months and this is what happens to you.”

“It wasn’t my fault,” Rick said, stung despite knowing Carl was playing with him. “Negan, he found us...he killed people.”

Carl stiffened beside him. “Who?”

“Andrea, Spencer,” he said, remembering. He closed his eyes tightly. “He threatened Judith.”

“Threatened how,” he asked, sitting up abruptly. “Dad, where is she?”

“Alexandria. She’s safe -- I did what he wanted.”

“And what did he want,” Carl asked softly.

How could he answer that, to his son? He shook his head, pressing his face more firmly into the pillow. “He isn’t a good man.”

“No, he isn’t,” Carl said stonily. “It’s gonna be OK dad. You’re not staying here.” Carl got off the bed and went to the exit, pounding until the door opened. An unfamiliar soldier stood on the other side, waiting expectantly.

“What?” she demanded, her eyes flickering to Rick before resting back on Carl.

“I want to go out.”

She raised both eyebrows before looking back at Rick. “You sure about that?”

“Yes,” he answered immediately. “Move aside.”

She shrugged and stepped away. Carl looked back at Rick, his face carefully neutral. “I’m going to get you out of this dad. Just...stay here, rest. I’ll be back.”

Rick wanted to call him back -- the idea that his boy was alone in the Sanctuary was terrifying, He sat up slowly, his head swimming as he reached out his hand. “Carl, no. I don’t -”
“I said I’ll be back soon dad. Rest, OK.”

“Carl, don’t -” he blinked as his son stepped through the door and slammed it shut behind him. “Carl?”

Damn it, why didn't he ever goddamn listen. Rick got slowly to his feet and staggered to the door, knocking instantly until the guard opened it. He tried to step past her but she wouldn't move.

"Get out of my way."

"Or you'll do what?" she asked, smiling nastily.

"I'm going after my son."

She stepped into his face, forcing him to stagger back if he didn't want to be bowled over. She smirked as she placed a hand on his shoulder and gently shoved him back. "You're not going anywhere sweetie, unless it's back in your bed. Negan's orders."

"Where did he go?" he demanded, gritting his teeth against her tightening grasp.

"Who, Negan?"

"No, my boy."

"The Eye?" she asked incredulously. "He's your kid?" she continued to push him until his knees hit the cot and he sat down heavily on the wiry mattress. "Fuck if you'd know it looking at the two of you. How old were you when you had him, like five?"

His concussion was still making his mind fuzzy. He shook his head, uncomprehending. "Please, is he safe?"

"Yeah," she said as she went back to the door. "I'd say he's pretty safe. Now stay here until we're ready for you, yeah?"

He didn't have the opportunity to respond because she shut the damned door in his face. Rick stared at it for a long moment, deliberating with himself if he would be able to break it down. He knew he didn't stand a damned chance but it made him feel a little less hopeless.

Eventually, the concussion got the better of him and he dropped off. He had no idea how much time passed before the door opened with a deafening bang, slamming into the wall as Negan stepped inside and switched on the lights. Rick hissed in pain, pressing his aching head against the pillow as he attempted to hide from the searing artificial light.

“Look whos up,” Negan boomed jovially as he fell down beside RIck on the bed, painfully jostling his ribs. “How are you feeling sweetheart?”

“I’ve felt better,” Rick answered honestly as he tried to subtly put some space between them. He didn’t get far before the saviour looped an arm around his waist and dragged him back to the centre of the bed. “Stop,” he gasped, weakly pushing the other man away. God, his ribs. “Negan, stop!”

He barely had a chance to flinch before the saviour had a firm, painful grip on his chin. He looked up at the older man, resisting the urge to struggle as he was pushed flat on his back. “You’re looking a little better at least,” Negan remarked, forcing Rick’s head from side to side. “You got your stink-eye back.”

“Get off me,” he said between gritted teeth.

Negan considered him thoughtfully before forcing Rick’s head back and pressing his lips against the smaller man's throat. “Your kids a pain in the goddamn ass, you know that?”

Rick swallowed against Negan’s hand, gripping the saviour by his wrist as attempted to alleviate his hold. “Don’t hurt him.”

“Or you’ll do what?” Negan asked, sounding genuinely intrigued as he took Rick’s wrist and pinned it against the mattress. “You ain’t exactly coming at me from a position of power here sweetcheeks.”

Rick closed his eyes as he attempted to push down the nausea he could feel building in his stomach. “I already told you I’ll do whatever it takes, whatever you need to keep my people safe. That includes my son.”

“Fuck Rick, if you think that kid needs you to keep him safe then you really don’t know him very well. Your boy is a goddamn psycho killer.”

Rick felt like someone had just slapped him. “What are you saying?”

“I’m saying that Carl, your boy, is not a nice man and he sure as shit don’t need you to keep him safe, sweetheart. Now zip your goddamn lips. It’s been a long night and I’m tired.”

Chapter 19: Truths

Chapter Summary

I love how much I get to swear when writing Negan :D

Negan woke up slowly, stretching leisurely against the squirming ball of warmth lying in front of him. He wasn't sure how long he spent idly thrusting against his bedmate before he remembered he wasn't waking up with one of his wives.

"Mornin' Rick,," he murmured, breathing into the sheriffs mop of curly brown hair. "How you feelin' this morning?"

"I need to piss," the southerner grunted, his body stiffening as Negan pressed a soft kiss against his shoulder.

"You need any help?"

It was a testament to how badly hurt the other man was that he hesitated before shaking his head no. "I'll be fine."

Negan rolled onto his back and lazily watched Rick struggle upright. The southerner breathed deeply for a few seconds before moving stiffly to his feet. He staggered to the bathroom, leaning heavily against the wall before opening the door and slamming it close behind him.

"You doing OK in there beautiful?" Negan called after a few minutes passed.

He got up when he didn't receive a reply and knocked lightly on the door.

"Rick?" he knocked again, louder this time.

"I'm fine," Rick eventually called, his voice barely audible over Negan's own breathing.

"You've been in there a while."

"I'm...cleaning up," Rick answered. He sounded pretty shaky.

"You can have a shower if you want," Negan offered. "But you gotta unlock the door first. Don't want the heat to get to ya, do we?"

A long pause passed. Negan couldn't help but picture the way the sheriff had to be warring with the need to be clean against the fear of making himself naked and vulnerable.

He grinned when he heard the door unlock and the sound of running water. He gave the other man approximately 30 seconds before he let himself in and sat his ass on the toilet seat.

“Shower feel good?” he asked brightly.

He didn’t receive a response.

“Rick?”

“I’ll be done in a second,” the other man muttered over the sound of running water. Negan was surprised but pleased Rick wasn’t having a complete breakdown. Maybe it was testament to how exhausted he was.

“There ain’t no rush. Being the boss has it’s benefits after all.”

He could almost feel the little sheriffs' indignation.

True to his word, the water switched off a few seconds later. He listened to the Alexandrian dry himself off, leaving him in relative peace. When the other man finally pulled back the shower curtain he had the towel wrapped firmly around his trim little waist.

Negan slowly trailed his gaze up and down the other man, lingering on the towel. He couldn’t help but think of the past time they bathed together. “Help yourself, did ya?”

Rick looked absolutely goddamn exhausted. “That a problem?”

“Course not sweetheart,” Negan boomed cheerfully as he held out his hand. “Need a hand getting out of the tub? I wouldn’t want you to trip.”

Rick stared at Negan’s outstretched hand with a hollow look of desperation. He hesitated for so long that Negan grew tired of waiting and grabbed his upper arm, half guiding/half dragging the Alexandrian out of tub.

“I thought about getting in there with you but figured you’d have a stroke or something. Ain’t I just so goddamn thoughtful?”

He didn’t wait for a response as he guided Rick over to the bed and

pushed him gently down. “It’s time to get serious. You and I got some stuff to discuss.”

“Where’s Carl?” Rick asked, completely steamrolling over what Negan had been about to say. Little prick.

“He’s around, I’m guessing. No doubt making a goddamn ruckus and being a general pain in my ass.”

Rick looked at him for the first time that morning. His glacial blue eyes narrowed slightly when Negan grinned at him. “He’s just a child.”

Negan couldn’t help himself and burst out laughing. “Jesus fucking Christ. Didn’t think I’d ever hear the day someone called the Eye a child. I told you last night, your kid is a goddamn psychopath. I don’t know what you and his momma did to fuck him up, but A+ for effort cause he is some piece of work.”

“What are you talking about?” Rick asked, his stink eye coming out in full force. “He’s not — he isn’t…”

Negan leaned into Rick’s space, a little surprised when the other man didn’t shy away from him. “Let me spell this out for you sweetheart. Your kid is a very, very bad man.”

Rick shook his head. Poor bastard was in denial.

“I know you’re not stupid Rick, but fuck-howdy are you naive. That boy of yours has murdered people, lots of ‘em. Hell, if I didn’t think the little prick was stab me in the back the first chance he got, I’d probably make him one of my generals. Lucky for me, I’ve don’t have a death wish.”

Rick didn’t seem to be getting it. He was still shaking his head. “Growing up in this new world has gotta fuck around with a kids head. Don’t blame yourself too much, darlin’. I’m sure you did the best you could.”

“I want to see him. I need -“

“Whoa there,” Negan said, grabbing the sheriffs arm when he tried to get up. The sudden movement caused the smaller man to wince and hiss in discomfort. “You’re in no position to demand anything, or did you forget what you’re doing here in the first place? We’ve got a deal.”

Rick tried to pull his arm free but Negan wasn't letting go. "I want to see my boy."

Fuck it if the little bastard wasn't a persistent mother fucker.

"And I want to get my dick wet. Looks like neither of us are getting what we want."

Chapter 20: Promises

Chapter Notes

> Quarantineeeeee...I might be writing more than usual, considering there is fuck all else to do :)

“Ladies, meet Rick. Rick, say hello to my wives.”

The southerner squirmed weakly against Negan’s hold around his waist, his breath shallow and laboured from their short walk.

“Don’t mind him,” Negan said brightly when Rick remained stubbornly silent. He led the pretty sheriff to a spare seat between Tanya and Frankie, pushing him down gently until he was sitting stiffly between them. “He’s not much of a talker.”

“He’s hurt,” Sherri noted, her tone carefully neutral.

“He’ll be fine. Doctor said he just needs a little rest and relaxation. That’s why he’s here. He’s gonna spend some time with you ladies whilst I go to work.”

“Carl -“ Rick began, already struggling to sit up.

His movements were slow and stiff. It was almost too easy to push him back against the sofa cushions. “Your boy and I have some things to discuss. I’ll let you see him when we’re done, scouts honour.”

“I’m not -“

Negan pressed his hand against Rick's mouth, cutting him off. “I’m giving you my word that I’ll let you see him. I always keep my word, ain’t that right ladies?”

His women nodded their ascent, humming without much enthusiasm.

“See? He’ll be fine,” he stepped back, looking Rick over thoughtfully. “Play nice with my wives, sweetheart. Upset any of them and I’ll be pissed. You get me?”

Rich pursed his lips, scowling but he gave a terse nod.

It was good enough. Besides, he doubted Rick was the violent type. The man‘s demeanour screamed southern gent. He wasn’t worried.

“I’ll see you beautiful people shortly. Don’t have too much fun whilst I’m gone.”

He didn’t wait for a response, striding out the room and nodding to fat Joey on his way out. “Make sure he behaves.”

“Y-yeah, sure thing boss.”

Negan grinned at him, chuckling softly as he walked down the hallways towards the main keep. “Knew I could count on you, Joey my man.”

He strode through the Sanctuary, not bothering to acknowledge his people bowing as he passed. He found the kid sitting in his office, his posture tense and watchful. He stood up the moment Negan walked through the door, his expression hardening when he realised his old man wasn’t going to join them.

“Where is he?”

“Good morning to you too, you little psycho.”

Jesus, if looks could kill.

“Is he ok?”

“You heard the doc. Your daddy needs some TLC. No one wants him biting the big one,” he clapped the kid on the shoulder, standing too close for it to be comfortable.“I mean, Jesus fuck, that’d be a hell of a waste. Ain’t everyday you come across a face like that. Not even before everything went to shit. Wouldn’t you agree, junior?”

Carl breathed in heavily, his hands fisting at his side. He wasn’t backing away. “How much?”

Negan allowed a slow, lazy smile to stretch across his lips. “For what?”

“You know what? How much?.”

“Sorry, you can’t afford him.”

The kid's single eye flashed dangerously. “How much?” He asked between gritted teeth.

Negan gripped his chin, considering. “Swear fidelity to me and I’ll let him go.”

The boy closed his eye, shuddering faintly. “Anything else.”

“You don’t have anything else I want.”

“Supplies? Guns?”

“I got plenty of both.”

Carl opened his eye, his expression hardening. “You don’t want me as an enemy.”

“Well excuse the fuck outta me, Carl but you wouldn’t be threatening me, would you?”

“He’s my dad,” the boy said, his tone almost but not quite pleading.

“And if you don’t want me to start chopping things off and sending them back to you in pieces, I suggest you let yourself out. Woodbury's not gonna take itself.”

“That could take weeks.”

“Then step to it soldier.”

The boy hesitated, his hatred almost palatable as he took a step forward, closing the small space between them. “If I give you Woodbury, all of it, will that be enough?”

Negan whistled, impressed. “Can’t imagine your people are gonna be too pleased by that.”

“Maybe not,” he agreed. “But it’s a risk I’m willing to take. Yes or no.”

“How about I think about it. After all, I haven’t had the chance to try your daddy out yet. Depends on…”

He was frankly surprised the kid had gonads to punch him. His face snapped to the side, smarting something fierce. “I guess I deserved that,” he said, chuckling as he grasped his aching jaw. “But try it again and I’ll string your daddy up by his pretty little neck, and I’ll make you watch. Now get out.

The boy seemed to realise he’d pushed his luck. He retreated out the door, never taking his eyes off Negan.

“Wait at the gate,” he said, making the kid pause at the door. “I promised I’d let him see you when we were done. You might as well

fill your boots, not like you're gonna be seeing him again for a hell of a long time."

Chapter 21: Children

Chapter Summary

Tiny chapter ahoy!

“I can see why he likes you,” the red-headed woman, Cherri, commented as she took the seat opposite Rick. “You have lovely eyes.”

He honestly didn’t know how to respond to that. He was usually pretty adept at reading people; she didn’t seem particularly interested in him, at least not physically. If anything she appeared vaguely bored. “Did he do this to you?” she gestured towards his face, presumably at his battered appearance.

He looked over at the guard, trying to gauge if he was listening to them. For the most part he looked disinterested, or perhaps he was trying to avoid looking too closely at the women, either way he wasn’t paying too much attention. “Some of it,” he said eventually, still cautious.

She hummed thoughtfully. “But then he had the doctor take a look at you. Interesting.”

“Is it?” Rick asked hollowly. He ran his hand over his jaw before rubbing tiredly at his eyes. He looked at the group of women, the two on either side of him, Sherri and the dark haired woman across the room. He was surprised they were dressed similarly, in tight white dresses, red high heels and heavy makeup. It left a bad taste in his mouth.

“Are you all - are you OK?”

“Well, aren’t you just adorable?” the blonde woman on his right said softly. She sounded genuine, if not a little sad.

He felt his cheeks flush and silently cursed his ridiculously pale skin.

“What are you going to do about it if we say no?” The dark skinned woman asked, her lips twitching into a mean smile. “No offence, but you’re hardly in a position to help us.”

“Do you need...help?” He asked, squashing down a growing sense of helplessness as the implications of Negan’s wives became clearer.

“Seriously, you’re the sweetest thing,” the blonde said, her eyes shining with so many emotions he couldn’t even begin to fathom. She stood up, swaying slightly before tottering into the adjoining room on stiletto heels.

“Don’t mind her,” a petite Latino woman said, her big brown eyes locked on the door the blond exited through. “Her husband, her first husband…he got the iron.”

“The iron?” Rick asked, certain he didn’t really want to know but unable to resist the urge to ask. “What -“

“You’ve seen Dwight?” Sherry asked softly.

“Yeah,” Rick said as understanding dawned. “I’ve seen him.”

“Then you can figure out what the iron is,” she said coldly.

Rick swallowed softly, easing back against the couch as he tried to find a less painful position to sit in. “Does he do it often?”

“As often as he feels he needs to, providing he doesn’t outright kill you of course.” Sherry said without a flicker of emotion. “Best not to test him.”

Rick thought of Andrea and Spencer, remembering their messy and entirely unnecessary deaths. He nodded slowly, feeling a slowly growing sense of horror as he considered the terrible things the man might do to his child.

“Where are you from?” The dark skinned woman asked as she eyed him up and down. “You’ve got the look about you?”

“The look?” Rick asked, completely lost.

“Like you managed to avoid the worst of it,” she clarified solemnly.

“Alexandria,” he admitted reluctantly.

“Negan mentioned your town,” Sherri said in that bored manner of hers. “It’s supposed to be a nice place.”

Sure beats this hellhole, Rick thought as he looked around their dreary surroundings. “It’s home,” he said instead, unwilling to divulge anything further.

“Must be nice,” the Latino woman sighed. “I can’t remember what

home feels like anymore."

Rick felt a sudden, urgent need to take Negan's wives literally anywhere else, but, just like Carol's relationship with Ed, Rick was powerless to get involved.

My daughters with that asshole, he suddenly remembered. He sat up a little straighter, breathing through the shooting pain in his ribs. "I need to get out of here."

The guard looked over at him, his small piggy eyes narrowing. "Move from that couch and Negan'll throw you back in the box."

Sherri shot the guard a flat look. "He can't get up, he isn't going anywhere."

It was sadly true. Rick couldn't do much of anything other than threat and worry. He hated it - he couldn't stand it. Damn it, he needed to help his kids!

Chapter 22

Negan decided to personally collect his little sheriff and was delighted to find him sandwiched between two of his wives, curled up and fast asleep on the sofa.

“Hello ladies. Did sleeping beauty cause you any trouble?” he asked the room at large.

“He passed out not long after you dropped him off,” Sherry remarked flatly. “He’s pretty beat up.”

“He can take it.”

Her eyes twitched very slightly. “He’s an Alexandrian. I’ve heard people talk - “

“Yeah, and what do people have to say?” he asked pleasantly.

She wisely pursed her lips and averted her gaze. She shrugged. “He just seems sweet.”

Negan smirked at her. “I think we’re in agreement there,” he went over to the sheriff and tapped him lightly on the cheek. “Wake up, sweetheart. It’s time to go.”

Rick woke with a jolt, recoiling when he realised Negan was looming over him. He blinked rapidly, clearly not fully awake. “What?”

“I’m taking you to your kid,” Rick continued to stare blankly back at him. “Your kid? Jesus, I’m talking about Carl. He’s waiting for you. Let’s go.”

He didn’t wait for Rick’s assent, levelling the man to his feet and dragging him out of the room by his bicep.

“Slow down,” Rick eventually gasped, stumbling in a downright pathetic attempt to gain his footing.

Negan sighed impatiently before wrapping his arm around the sheriff's waist and pulling Rick’s arm across his shoulders. Their height difference made it necessary for Negan to stoop down; even so Rick was struggling to keep his footing.

The easiest thing would be to scoop the other man up and just carry

him, but he needed the kid to remain calm and he didn't think hauling his dad around like a sack of potatoes was a good idea, particularly given the Eye's reported temper.

Rick was breathing heavily in Negan's ear, clearly in pain and obviously desperate to appear strong. Negan had to hand it to him, he was a tough little fucker, despite how he'd managed to avoid the worst of things hiding away in his precious little town.

The kid was waiting for them at the gate with his people. His single-eyed gaze locked unwaveringly on Negan as they approached.

"Here he is, as promised," he thrust the sheriff into the kids arm and stepped back. Rick immediately wrapped his arms around his boy, pulling him close despite the fact he could barely stand up.

The two of them started whispering, quiet but fierce. Rick looked desperate, his knuckles turning white from how tightly he was holding onto the boy.

"That's enough," Negan said after a minute or two, stepping into their space and placing a possessive hand on the sheriff's shoulder. "Say goodbye to daddy, junior."

The kids lips pursed into a tight line. His people shifted behind him. Negan could practically taste the violence in the air.

"Don't do anything stupid," he leaned down a little until he and the kid were face to face. "You are outnumbered - you can't win and you know it." He straightened back up and pulled the sheriff flush to his side. "Don't look so glum junior, daddy will be here waiting for you when you get back, safe and sound."

The kid reached past Negan and caught Rick by his nape. "I'll be back soon, dad. Just...rest up, OK?"

The sheriff gripped the kids forearm and squeezed. "Be careful, yeah?"

"Yeah," he agreed, levelling one last hateful look at Negan before turning his back on them and gesturing his people forward. "Come on, let's get out of here."

"And then there were two," Negan whispered into Rick's curls. "How shall we spend our time until he returns?"

The Alexandrian tensed, averting his face. Negan turned them both

around, hauling Rick inside. He immediately threw the smaller man over his shoulder, smirking at Rick's pained grunt.

"It's been a busy couple of days, huh gorgeous? How about we go back to my room and you continue your nap?"

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!